

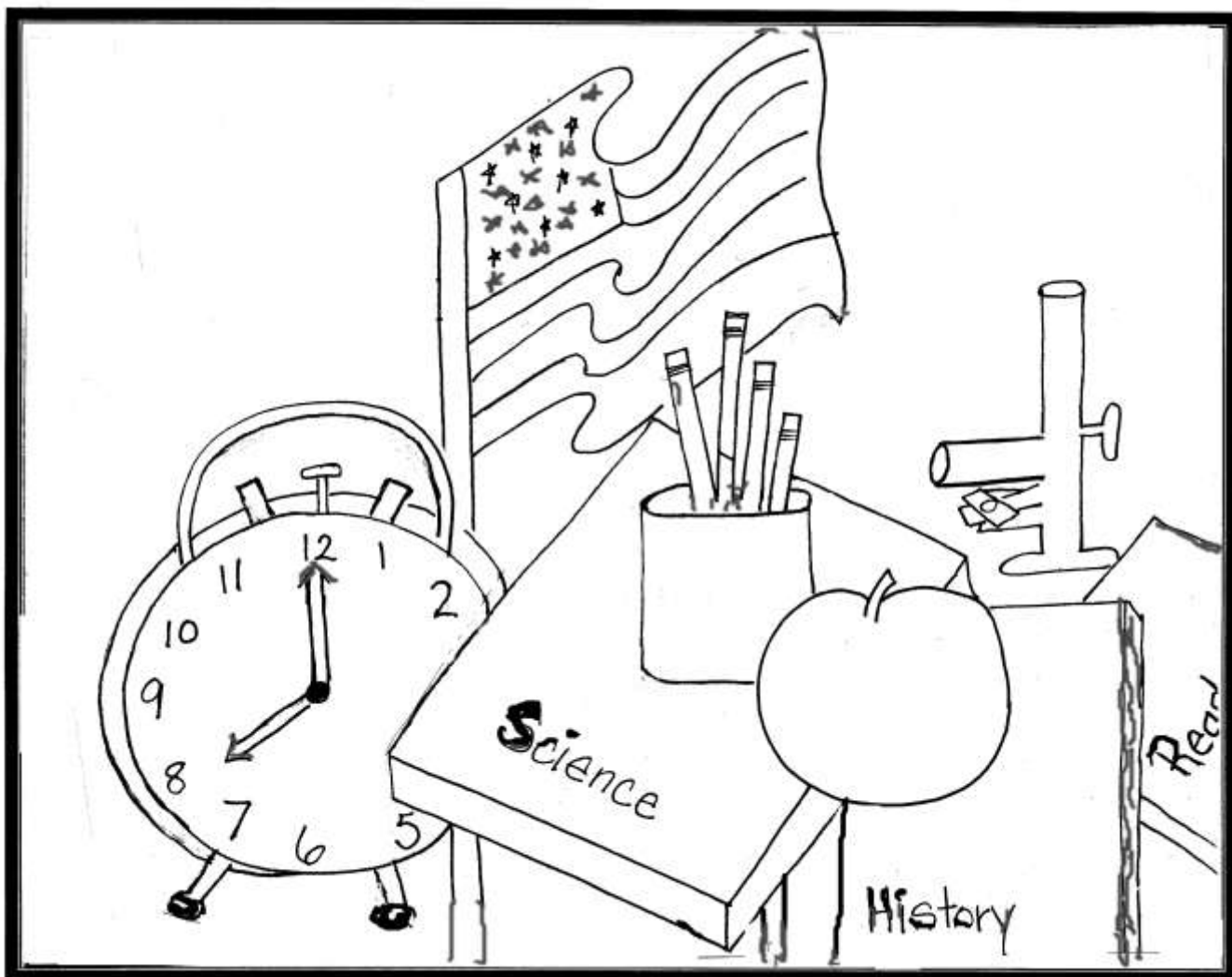
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Just Starting to Homeschool?

How to answer the outside (or inner) voices that ask you:
“What in the world are you doing?”

Spiritual, social, academic, and personal advantages!

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Just Starting to Homeschool?

A veteran homeschool mom's thoughts for people who are considering homeschooling...or who have begun and need a boost



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This is a production of Homeschool How-To's, by Renée Ellison
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Just Starting to Homeschool?

What in the world are you doing?

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Some parents toy with the idea of starting to homeschool but give up, either for fear of what friends and relatives will say, or because they are just not all that convinced that homeschooling is really any better than the way their children are currently being educated.

Those who have been in the homeschooling movement for some time would answer that the longer one is in the movement, the more apparent the positive trade-offs become. After a few years, it seems obvious. But if you are just beginning, or are considering homeschooling, a look at some of the benefits all stacked up at once may buttress your resolve.

So, to clarify the issues, let's take a look at what homeschooling does for your child spiritually, academically, and socially. Then we can consider what it does for you as the parent.

Spiritually

Homeschooling parents desire to raise godly seed, knowing that their children are eternal beings whose character will matter greatly in the next life. They believe that these are “training days for reigning days.” They see that down the road their careful, thorough training will yield glorious results: wise, stable, secure, mature adults destined for leadership in this world and the next. Homeschoolers don't view this work casually or as an afterthought, but pursue it with prayerful deliberateness. They seek to cultivate a love *for* God and an obedience *to* God in response to being made and redeemed *by* God.

This means that they teach history as His-story indeed from start to finish. It means, too, that they help their children locate His daily paths of righteousness now in the light of that history.

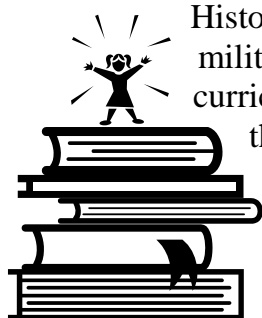


Homeschooling parents seek to shape their children's character both by inspiration and by discipline in the actual execution of each trait (loyalty, follow-through, a cheerful countenance, etc.). They help their children remain steadfast in their devotion to Christ while deflecting the wiles of the Devil. They believe that children are primarily the parents' responsibility -- they alone will be held accountable. They believe that that responsibility continues well past the age of five. And finally, they believe that children, for the most part, do not make good missionaries. Most youth follow the pack.

In short, they seek to separate their children from those who are rushing headlong into the public school's curriculum based on last month's media crises, peer cloning, egalitarianism, inoculation against perverseness, toe to toe authority challenges, exaggerated preoccupation with holiday mania, universal common background by shared existential TV viewing (causing everyone's childhood to be exactly like everyone else's), testing, labeling, pigeon-holing, numbness to life skills, deadness to God. That's all. It would be like...let's see...like the Jews giving their children to the Egyptians to educate before the Exodus.

Academically

Homeschooling parents believe that tutoring is the shortest distance between two points.



Historically, it has been the education of choice for royal families, future military generals, composers, and other leaders. Instead of plowing through curriculum, one is able to teach for mastery (i.e., you don't turn the page until the child has mastered the content of that page). Grades are not necessary in this homeschooling system. It would be rather like grading the growth of a tulip. Whatever is it for? Tutoring enables one to cover lots of material faster and deeper, without wasting time forming lines, taking recess breaks, head counts, and waiting upon endless administrative interruptions.

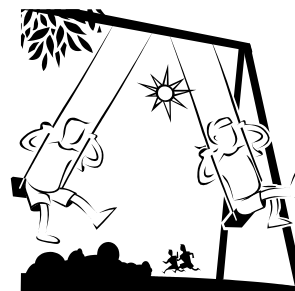
Tutoring provides a quiet environment in which to cultivate a long attention span, and allows for developing complex thought patterns -- something denied entirely by current flashing techniques used by the media to overpower and control. The world thrusts at us information outside of a context. And they call that an education?

Many additional pedagogical benefits accrue to home schoolers:

1. The tutor knows the strengths and weaknesses of the children very well, so there is no slipping through the cracks for weeks at a time.
2. The teacher can focus on developing excellence in all that is undertaken.
3. The instructor transfers his/her own contagious lifetime love of learning to the student.
4. Time is available for pursuing in greater measure other goals such as music, athletic challenges, life skills, and business savvy.
5. Children are not exhausted with academics because they had to perform them at school and then again as homework at night.

Socially

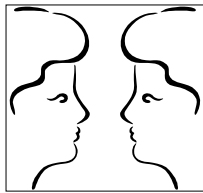
Like it or not, the major influence in any school (other than homeschool) is the other children. The social imprinting is naturally absorbed. The modeling is limitless. School is seven-plus hours of conditioning by someone other than you. There is just no question



that mentoring with adults yields far more than does prolonged association with unmonitored peers. An eight-year-old cannot mentor another eight-year-old because he lacks an experience base to make him wise. The book of Proverbs reminds us that “Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child” and that “When you walk with the wise, you will be wise.”

The most frequent question asked of homeschoolers -- almost a knee-jerk response -- is “Aren't you worried about socialization?” The answer is “Yes, and that's why I'm removing my child from negative socialization, wanting only positive socialization, hospitality, service.” Many parents ask their children to go play somewhere else--get out of the house; give me space. But it is precisely during playtime that much of this early socialization can be trained. Far better to have children play under foot so we can guide them to choose godly responses. In addition, this allows us to help them process anything negative that they may experience. True socialization is learning to interact with all ages.

Children exposed to worldly unscreened influences will absorb those influences faster than the Bubonic Plague, however subtle its appearance may be -- clear down to the crossing of arms and sulking.



You

Now on to *you*. What happens to you in the process? God disciplines you while you train your children. You will be the first one in your family He will shape. Discipling your own children day after day will develop reserves of patience that you never thought possible of a mere mortal.

Consistency will move from theory to reality because you will HAVE to be consistent in order to live with one another all day, every day. But the up side is that you won't have to spend time undoing and redoing what the school destroyed. You'll be able to move from strength to strength and see great strides in a training that is cumulative. Instant, joyful obedience can be yours, after all!

Homeschooling gets you organized and establishes right priorities. There is less and less time for the wrong ones. Excess shopping, TV watching, long fruitless phone conversations will make way for more noble uses of your time. It will serve to steer you away from selfish tendencies and the appetites of your own flesh. Life will begin to happen in the home rather than somewhere else, because you'll BE at home more.

You will love the flexibility of schedule. No more panicked mad dashes to send children off on long bus rides in the morning; no more sleep-deprived nights that lead to sickness.

In addition, you'll be able to take advantage of incidental teaching at optimum moments. You'll get to make up the gaps in your own education, quickening again a life-long appetite for learning that got dulled out of you by academic institutions. Someone said, “The beauty of homeschooling is that it educates two generations at once!” If you are not an avid reader

already, you will become one simply in order to stay ahead of your children! You'll see whole areas of academics bloom into personal passions as you lead your children into these delights. Yours will be the creme de la creme of careers. As G. K. Chesterton said, "How can it be a large career [donning one of the world's professions] to tell other people's children about one narrow thing and a small career to tell one's own children about the universe?"

After embarking on homeschooling you'll view child rearing differently, not in terms of just mere maintenance, but because you'll have your children's souls and spirits in the palm of your hand during their most formative years. You'll bond well for a lifetime of caring and loving.

Homeschooling returns the dominion of your child to you. Who really wants their children raised by someone else anyway, once they take a long hard look at it? When you place your child under the authority of another adult, you transfer the submission of your children to that adult. You may no longer be the last word to your child. How soon do you want to give up that privilege? God gives it to you for a long while. You may regret selling it cheaply like Esau's birthright for a pot of porridge -- for your temporary convenience or to pursue a larger income for your family.

When you commit to homeschooling, you'll be refined by the circumstances. You'll grow ever more dependent on the Lord because when it gets tough it's your commitment to be obedient to Him, not to homeschool, that keeps you going.

Now let's look at some enemy tactics:

As soon as the homeschooling idea settles into your bosom, lovingly landscaped by hope, the Enemy will come knocking. Knowing his tactics can give you power over him right away.

1. He'll hit you with the competency question

The first thing he will stalk you with is your ability to teach your own children. What makes you think you can educate your child? What credentials do you have? What if you omit something very important? What if you don't have the patience for it?

God will lead you. We have this assurance from beginning to end. The Word tells us that "He gently leads those that are with young" and that "When they take you before the authorities, don't worry about what you shall say. I will put my words in your mouth." He will give the energy, the strategy, the victory, and the fruit. Consider Moses' mother, and Mary, the mother of Yeshua (Jesus). What kind of credentials do you think THEY possessed? Mary must have done something right, because when Christ was twelve the Rabbis circled Him for three days, asking Him questions. Moses couldn't forget the impact of his early training -- he chose it again as an adult.



2. The intensity of relating

Then the Enemy attacks with fear. Will I be able to stand such intensity of interaction day in and day out? I'll be all tangled up in each of my children's actual thinking processes and learning styles. Will I be able to take the sheer quantity of interchanges required in living in such close relationship?

Many fears exist only in the mind. Relax! You'll grow into it. You'll adjust and adapt and in the end you'll feel at a great loss without it. It is all so enriching, so real-life giving. After a while, other life pales in comparison. It's like a young mother's first rude shock that "the baby needs me every minute!" But take the baby away, after several months, and the mom goes crazy with longing, not knowing where in the world to put her arms and how to cope with her empty lap.

The intensity of relating does cause friction (for strategies, see our how-to booklet #69, *Teaching the Resistant Student*). But the homeschooling family is able to work it out early rather than backing away from it. The alternative most parents choose is to ignore the friction, allowing it to fester and erupt sometime during adolescence.

3. Burnout

Our foe will attempt to erode your homeschooling resolve by sheer exhaustion. But as one veteran homeschooling mom said, "You can think you're doing the worst job possible and miss huge chunks of time [due to illness or a move] and still come out several grade levels ahead of the public school!"



The solution is to vary your schooling. Take a break. Try working with only one child at a time for a few days. Vary the *place* you do your schooling. Vary the subjects. Begin with the one you usually end with. Try shorter time slots. Have dad teach the awful subject for one week in the evenings. Alternate the content if there are too many subjects to cover all in one day. You can cover some of the subjects on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and others on Tuesday and Thursday. See our how-to booklet #61 on *Burnout* for additional strategies.

4. The enemy's assault on godly beginnings

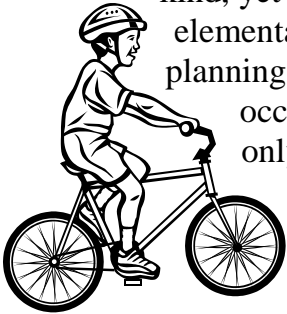
He comes on hard at first, because if he can destroy something in infancy he takes captive all of the mature, full-blown fruit as well. So he goes after babies through abortion, robs beginning ministries of money, sabotages the first efforts of nearly everything God-centered. The answer? Just simply endure. As Ephesians says, "Having done all, to stand."

5. The attack on sexuality

Just a quick note re: the teaching of sexuality. We've got to aggressively train this one. The world is going haywire. Conversely, a Biblical view leads us to several simple mandates.

a. Girls should be trained to quickly follow the leadership of their father or older brother. Arguing, slothful following undermines a man's confidence in his leadership and is deadening to the life of the home (Ephesians 5:24).

b. Boys should be trained in thoughtful leadership -- a leadership that is considerate and kind, yet full of godly purpose and resolve. Boys should start leading in the upper elementary grades. They can lead in family devotions, in decision-making, in planning of activities, etc. Grown men don't lead because they've had few occasions to practice in safe environments. Something becomes natural only by the frequent doing of it. Lack of male leadership is crippling the power of God's life in far too many homes.



c. Ensure that your children dress outwardly to fortify the inner life. Did you ever notice how dress is the first thing to go when rebellion sets in? Some say, "Oh it doesn't matter how they DRESS." But the reality is that the heart has already begun to slip. Never allow boys to wear girls' clothing or to put balloons in their chests, even in a play. It is an abomination to the Lord (Deuteronomy 22:5). It confuses a distinction God intends us to maintain. Encourage girls to wear dresses as frequently as possible, especially as they grow older. Girls can be trained to desire to put on a dress again quickly after wearing pants for a sports event, for example. The Scriptures admonish longer hair for girls, shorter hair for boys (1 Corinthians 11).

Curriculum

The present world of curriculum choices is a sea that is growing larger all the time. At worst, it is overwhelming. At best, it consumes your time and money. Begin by getting the monkey off your back. Drop the panic and remind yourself that all you absolutely need is the Bible. Put it all in historical perspective. Abraham Lincoln didn't have the benefit of any of these modern materials. Thousands of persecuted and suffering Christians lived on the words of Scripture alone for centuries -- and still do. With this in mind, calmly go forth to pick your curriculum.

If money is tight, use what you HAVE first. It would no doubt take a long while to thoroughly exhaust what you can teach from in your home already. Many people stockpile curriculum, over-buy, and can't thoroughly use what they purchase. The stacks of books sit there like rude taskmasters, heaping upon you the guilt of not using them yet. Instead, ask veteran homeschoolers what they have used and what they like. Then go over to their home and watch them use these materials. Picture yourself using them. Do they fit your style? Do very little impulse buying. Think about it for a while. Do you still want it after three

days, or has another product caught your fancy? How “mother-easy” is this new curriculum? Does it require mountains of preparation time on your part?

The development of teaching materials by private homeschoolers has been the greatest boon to the American educational system ever. For years, many citizens pleaded to return the responsibility of education to the private sector, believing the competition would expose the heavily biased textbook industries, break up the monopolies and create new vibrant materials. And that is exactly what has happened. The market is exploding. Truly only the survival of the fittest, the best, the exceptional will capture our dollar. The competition is wonderfully wholesome. We all benefit.

In choosing curriculum, some homeschoolers like to avoid buying a complete field of study from only one major textbook company, even if it is Christian. Their rationale is that the writing program taught by a veteran schoolteacher of thirty years, for example, may be far superior to that of a company that has to publish textbooks on every subject. Your own collection of individual educational products seriously targeted at specific courses may give you a good start at having a strong curriculum.

Other home educators, on the other hand, desire to go with a thorough K-12 curriculum that progresses in small bite-size sequential chunks. This gives heart-rest to the parents who are looking for a curriculum that is easy to administer. They don't have to run all over town to gather books and supplies, and they don't have to spend their evenings tediously studying a teacher's manual to prepare for the next day of school. For further help in selecting your curriculum, see our how-to booklet #81, *The Right Stuff*.

Don't hesitate to throw out or give away curriculum that isn't working. A good rule of thumb is that if you aren't wild about it, your kids won't be either. We teach best what we ourselves are passionate about. Be comforted by the fact that you can make many financial mistakes with curriculum and still be spending far less than even one month's tuition at a private school.

And finally, go for it – you have nothing to lose

Don't hesitate. Get your feet wet. The West would have never been won if there hadn't been that first tired wagon. You can always correct your course in the process. Just move on your convictions. Your children may well bless you for it.

One last word: stick with it for at least a year. Some, having gone through all the work of getting set up, quit because their first week was chaos. Those families missed the joys that could have been theirs, had they hung in there. It simply takes time to get it all humming smoothly. Imagine your homeschooled child two years from now. Where would he/she be if left to the public school? Look around you at the children that age now. Do you like what you see?

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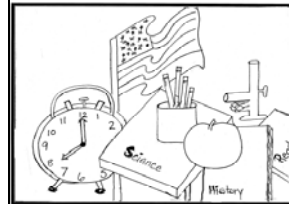
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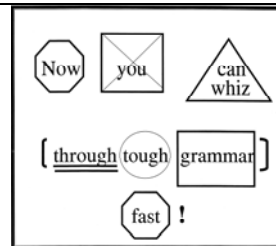


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For 3rd-6th grades.

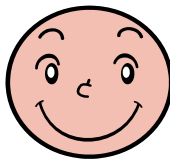
A method to teach grammar with shapes for easy right-brain recall. Plus, tips on spelling.



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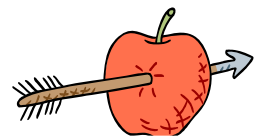


The Right Stuff \$4.50

For K-12. (31 pages; #81)

Guaranteed to save you hassle! Spare yourself the expense and academic waste of both time and energy by choosing just the right materials. What to look for. What NOT to buy.

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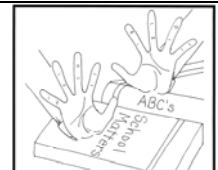


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What users are saying about Renee Ellison's homeschool how-to's:

Thank you! I love your simplicity approach! (Mrs. M. in The Woodlands, Texas)

~~~

There is much wisdom in your booklets, simply laid out for hectic parents and homeschoolers who don't want another part time job reading through excess verbage in hope of finding treasure. It's right there in your writing for a quick read and quick application. Zoom-Type is just superb in simplicity, effectiveness and ease of use for the "kidlins". You are offering a great service to moms and dads who need easy to implement helps. (Mrs. Bates in Montana)

~~~

Thank you so much for providing this excellent ministry, from which I have just purchased four titles as E-Books. Your E-Book service is especially helpful for those of us overseas who are interested in your products. (Mr. G. in the North of England)

~~~

I am a new homeschool mom with 4 sons ages 8, 6, 3, 1 1/2, and often find it hard to finish a book. Your booklets have wonderful information that I can digest in one sitting!

~~~

I missed the conference in Houston this year, so I missed getting more of your practical information. :(I always recommend that people look for you at conferences because of the great help you were to me for my first year of homeschooling last year. (Mrs. McM. in Spring, Texas)

~~~

Your materials are a regular part of our lives and we appreciate the impact they have on our children. I am certain that you treat many, many customers with the attentiveness you showed to me... (Mrs. R. in Washington)

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This is one of many

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