

November 2014 • Volume 18, Issue 4

TEXAS HOME SCHOOL COALITION

# REVIEW

KEEPING  
TEXAS  
FAMILIES  
FREE

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Advertising • sales@thsc.org

Editor • Kelly Drawdy • kelly@thsc.org

Production and Design • Adams Creative  
joel@adamscreative.com

Associate Editor • Shelli Simons

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Editorial correspondence and address changes should be directed to review@thsc.org. The deadline for article submission for the February 2015 issue is November 1, 2014 and February 1 for the May 2015 issue. Interested authors should see Writers' Guidelines at THSC.org.

The articles in this magazine reflect the freedom of home educators in Texas to choose from a wide variety of home school philosophies and teaching methods. Opinions and attitudes expressed in articles do not necessarily reflect the beliefs of the Texas Home School Coalition. THSC does not endorse or advocate any one method or philosophy. The board encourages each home educator to seek God's will in determining what is best for him, his school, and his students.

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# REVIEW

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

TIM LAMBERT



*The rapid growth of home schooling  
across the state of Texas over the past several decades  
has been nothing short of astonishing.*



When THSC was founded in the 1980s home education was a rarity. Not only had the Texas Education Agency banned home schooling in 1981, but state officials actively prosecuted well over 100 Texas families for educating their children at home. Several parents even faced jail time during this era.

However, in the late 1980s and early 1990s a series of favorable court rulings drastically changed state education laws, opening the door for parents to home school their children without penalty. Eventually, the Texas Legislature specifically affirmed “the fundamental right of parents to control the education and upbringing of their children.”

***Today, we estimate that more than 120,000 Texas families have chosen to educate their children at home, and the home schooling movement continues to grow with each passing year.***

In fact, more than 1.5 million students nationwide are now home schooled. I am so encouraged to see the resources, support groups, curricula, and—most importantly—the freedoms now available to so many home schooling families. Nevertheless, the fight is far from over.

***Even today, nearly 30 years after THSC’s founding, many lawmakers and judges seek to rob parents of the fundamental right to educate their children.***

Though THSC’s tactics have changed noticeably over the decades, our overriding goal to keep Texas families free has remained the same. For example, THSC continues to represent the Tutt family in Dallas County. As I have previously mentioned in this column, CPS officials unlawfully seized the Tutts’ children late last year, and—although some of the children have now been returned—Mr. and Mrs. Tutt were stripped of their rights to educate their kids at home. In a recent development in the case, the commissioner of the Department of Family and Protective Services contacted me and insisted that CPS officials did not unfairly target the Tutt family due to their home schooling. Yet, he also claimed that the children’s educational setting “is relevant to the investigation,” which is a direct contradiction of previous CPS policy. I quickly responded to the commissioner, pointing out the agency’s inconsistent conduct and urging him to reverse these policy violations.

Overall, the travesty against the Tutt family continues, and CPS officials continue to wantonly violate existing laws and protocol. We are expecting additional court hearings and legal proceedings, and THSC will stand with the Tutts and urge the government to return all of the family’s children to their healthy home school environment. This situation is exceptionally disturbing, so I know the entire Tutt family would greatly appreciate your prayers.

In another legal battle, THSC filed a lawsuit against the Texas Ethics Commission (TEC), challenging the TEC’s recent targeting of 501(c)(4) groups that engage in political activism.

***Our lawsuit contends that the TEC's actions constitute a violation of the 2010 U.S. Supreme Court Citizens United case, which recognized non-profit organizations' right to engage in political speech and advocacy.***

In fact, the Supreme Court affirmed that political speech is "indispensable to decision-making in a democracy, and this is no less true because the speech comes from a corporation rather than an individual."

Despite this Supreme Court decision, the TEC continues to flagrantly disregard the political rights of nonprofits by subjecting groups to inappropriate scrutiny. The TEC has even demanded that certain 501(c)(4) groups share private donor information, which is, of course, an illegal attempt to intimidate such organizations.

Already, our lawsuit against the TEC has generated national attention. The Wall Street Journal reported on our lawsuit, correctly concluding that "the real goal of the Ethics Commission and its legislator

accessories is to reduce the influence of critics and expose donors to political intimidation."

Though Texas home schoolers are more numerous than ever before, THSC remains ever watchful of government encroachment upon the freedoms we hold dearly. And though families enjoy so much independence with regard to home education, THSC will tactfully challenge agencies like CPS and the TEC that threaten to suppress our constitutional rights.

***Here, in these busy days of the school year, I encourage you to thank the Lord for the freedoms we enjoy on a daily basis. Though the battle is far from over, THSC will remain vigilant.***

Our God is gracious, and He continues to bless families and the home schooling movement at large. I pray that you will be encouraged today as you consider the freedoms we enjoy as Christians, as Texans, and as Americans.



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# The Fight to Protect Home School Rights

*THSC has had a monumentally successful year thus far on many fronts!*

*From our work in the election cycle to our fights in the courtroom, the battle for home schooling and parental rights has never been more in THSC's favor.*

It has been said that progress is not measured by the length of one's stride but by the consistency of it. In the late 1980s home schoolers and parents were under siege from a government that openly persecuted them for their beliefs and for exercising their freedom. Their history is stained with lengthy battles and they have struggled against seemingly impossible odds, but what they experience today are the fruits of those labors that were so faithfully fought for and defended. In the past, home schoolers fought for the right to exist. Today, we fight to protect the rights their efforts have secured already.

The election cycle is perhaps the greatest method entrusted to THSC by which to preserve those freedoms. Many people mistakenly assume that elections are an optional area of involvement and that fighting in the legislature and in the courts is sufficient for the security of their rights and the futures of their children. THSC takes elections very seriously, and for the 2014 election cycle we have never worked harder.

THSC was instrumental in adding 10 staunch conservatives to the statewide ballot for this November through its work in the primary elections. Additionally, THSC played a critical role in defeating Texas' two most liberal senators and replacing them with loyal defenders of parental rights and home schooling. Alongside our victory in the race for lieutenant governor, these new allies in the Texas Senate have helped create what some people have called the most conservative senate in Texas history. Conservatives also fended off attacks on multiple fronts in the Texas House—where the establishment fought tooth and nail to defeat Texas' most conservative representatives. Texans not only successfully fended off the attacks but also won nine conservative seats in the Texas House. The participation of home schoolers in the 2014 election cycle has helped pave the way for the defense of parental rights and traditional values during the 84th Legislative Session.

THSC may not be deeper in the trenches anywhere than it is in the courtroom. It is precisely because THSC recognizes the significance of the threat faced by home schoolers and parents in this area that it has taken such a serious stand with its work in the judicial sector. During the 2014 election cycle THSC launched a new webpage dedicated to exposing corrupt judges and shedding light on the darker corners of the courtroom. The THSC Judicial Wall of Shame has caused a stir around the state for judges whose history is less than aboveboard. Three of the nine judges listed on the Judicial Wall of Shame have already either resigned or retired under the political backlash they received from their constituents. Once again, the greatest defense against corruption is transparency. Too many judges in today's society forget the difference between rewriting the law and interpreting the law, and it is up to the people who elect them to hold them accountable to the laws they have promised to uphold.



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**Tim Lambert, President  
Texas Home School Coalition**

*"Ken and I had the privilege of home schooling all four of our children at different points in their lives. You can absolutely count on Ken to defend your right to home school your children. I hope you will vote for my husband in the General Election on Tuesday, November 4th."*

**Angela Paxton**



Paxton family, left to right: Tucker, Katie, Angela, Ken, Mattie, and Abby.

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During the 83rd Legislative Session THSC launched an unprecedented initiative by recruiting six home school graduates who lived full-time in Austin during the session—reading bills, interfacing with legislators, and drafting legislation. THSC is preparing to recruit a new team of Watchmen for 2015 and the 84th Legislative Session. In 2013 the Watchmen rose to the challenge of defending the home schooling community and coordinated what has been hailed by outside groups as “the most effective lobby effort in the 83rd Legislature.” When the Watchmen return to Austin in 2015 it will be with the experience and reputation they need to leave an even bigger mark on our state’s capital. THSC will wade into the session championing two major pieces of legislation: the Parental Rights Restoration Act and the Tim Tebow Bill.

Ultimately, all of THSC’s efforts in the political realm are motivated by our dedication to protecting the right of parents to teach and educate their own children. Today’s children will build their own Texas out of what their parents leave behind. Freedom may be defended by a dedicated populace, but it is preserved by an educated posterity. The sacrifices parents make today will be either utilized or squandered based not upon what they give up to defend their children and their future, but by what they invest to prepare them for it. As John Adams wisely stated, “Posterity will never know how much it cost the present generation to preserve their freedom! We must hope they will make a good use of it.”

As we approach the General Election this November, this issue becomes especially apparent in regard to our responsibility to vote. Children will grow up to replicate what their parents do even more than what they say. Explaining to them how important it is to preserve home schooling, parental rights and freedom rings hollow if parents fail to show up to defend their children’s future at the ballot box. Rest assured that future generations of children will exercise their right to vote. The question is whether it will be done because parents instilled in them the value of that right or because they are fighting to regain the freedom they lost by failing to exercise it in the beginning.

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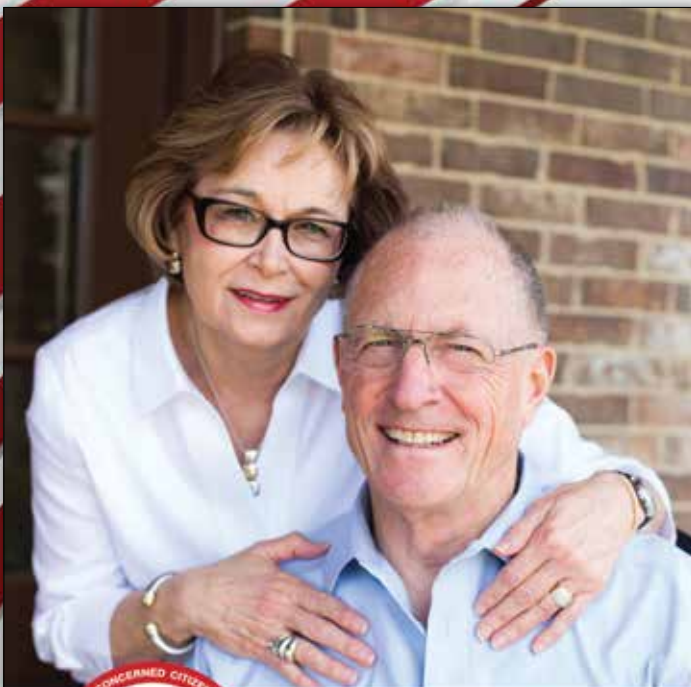
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A photograph of a woman with blonde hair tied back, wearing a pink shirt, sitting outdoors and reading a large book to two children. A young girl with blonde pigtails in a red dress sits to the left, and a young boy in a white tank top and blue overalls sits to the right, both looking at the book. The background shows green foliage and a bright sky.

# Just One More Chapter: The Importance of Reading Aloud

by Sherry McElhannon

**M**y mom closed the book to a chorus of groans from my brothers and me. She was used to this reaction, even expected it, as it seemed our daily read aloud time after lunch inevitably ended with a cliffhanger. Some days she held firm and put the book away (out of reach, of course; otherwise, one of us would sneak a peek at the next chapter or even finish the book without the others). But some days even Mom's curiosity got the best of her, and afternoon school plans were put on hold until she finished reading it to us.

Those afternoons of listening to my mom read aloud are fond memories but they also had a direct impact on my life as a reader.

## MECHANICS OF READING

The importance of reading to babies and toddlers is uncontested. Little ones learn the meanings of words and speech patterns by listening to the voices of parents and others. Unfortunately, once children learn to read on their own, we often leave them to it. But the benefits of hearing the written word spoken aloud by an accomplished reader go beyond infancy! You don't have to have a radio announcer's voice to make a read aloud fun for your children. Reading with expression, even attempting different voices, can help children see that the words on the page can come to life, which improves children's reading fluency. Choosing read-aloud material slightly above a child's reading level is a non-threatening way of exposing them to new words and more complicated sentence structures that will help improve personal reading.

## MODELING READING PRACTICES

For adult readers, many aspects of reading are automatic. We wonder, question, and process what is happening as we read, but these are skills that children must learn and practice. Reading aloud is a great way to model these processes for children. It is difficult, since it requires us to stop and think about the things we've long done automatically, but the best way to help children become better readers is to show them how you do it. As you begin to model reading practices, read the next chapter in the read-aloud on your own, marking places to stop and interact with your children. Eventually, just as reading processes are automatic, looking for places to help your children think more critically will also become natural.

When you read a passage with vivid description, pause and have your children close their eyes and imagine! Reread the passage and ask your children what the description reminds them of. At the end of a chapter ask what they think will happen next and why. Write down

their predictions, and see if they are correct as you continue to read! Stop and ask questions: "Why do you think that is important?" "How do you think that character is feeling?" "Do you remember when the author told us about that?"

## CULTURE OF READING

Beyond the obvious academic benefits, setting aside regular time to read aloud to your children will promote a culture of reading in your home. By willingly abandoning her responsibilities to be drawn into a story, my mom showed us it is OK to be emotionally invested in a book and that time spent reading is time well spent. There was one day when Mom had to turn *The Sign of the Beaver* over to a visiting neighbor because she was crying too hard to finish reading it aloud. Sometimes my dad even joined in as we continued to read after dinner, and as a family we bonded over classics like *Carry On, Mr. Bowditch*; *The Island of the Blue Dolphins*; and *My Side of the Mountain*. We also learned to sit still and be respectful while listening.

Mom's investment has certainly paid off. My brothers and I are all proficient, even voracious, readers. Reading shaped my profession, and as a librarian, I want to help others love books as much as I do. I also hope to pass this legacy of the love of reading on to my almost-one-year-old as well, by always making time for another reading of his favorite Sandra Boynton book and eventually expanding his repertoire of favorites, as my mom expanded mine.



Resources for Choosing Great Read-Alouds:  
<http://www.sonlight.com/read-alouds.html>  
<http://www.readaloud.org/>

*Sherry is a reader, a librarian, a mom, and a home school graduate. Find her reviews and simple teaching ideas for books on her website: [literaryfusions.com](http://literaryfusions.com)*

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# DISCOVERY LEARNING

## A Way to Help Your Children Love Learning for a Lifetime

by Lynn Dean

Like most five-year-olds, I could hardly wait to start school. When I walked into the classroom that first day, my new dress and shiny shoes testified to the importance of the occasion. My ponytail was slicked back so tight I could feel myself blinking as I took in the array of new and unbroken crayons, construction paper, easels, paints, brightly colored books and posters, and a windowsill filled with seedlings. I was so excited I almost hyperventilated! I encountered some frustration when we hadn't been taught to read by the end of the first week—that was my primary reason for going to school, after all—but the science experiment to see how light and moisture affected mold growth on bread kept me keen to go back each morning.

Somehow, though, my interest had waned before I left elementary school. In my professional bio I confess that by junior high I had become a “reluctant historian.” The coach/teacher sat on his desk and read in a monotone as we read along in our textbooks about dates and battles and people who were dead. There weren't even any good pictures. I'd have dozed off, but the prospect of a test every Friday egged me on. To be honest, I was equally bored with almost every other subject, as each was taught pretty much the same way.

“School” does not necessarily result in learning, I discovered. I loved learning, but school beat the love of learning right out of me.

When I looked into the eager faces of my own children 20-something years later, I didn't want to do that to them. The idea of home schooling gave me great hope, but to be honest, I was so overwhelmed in the early years that I reverted to what was familiar. I bought books, and we diligently did “school at home.” I watched the eagerness leave my children's faces and knew there had to be a better way to teach, so I took stock of the things I remembered fondly from my own learning experiences—the things that “stuck.”

My husband provided one clue: His dad had traveled in his work, and in the summers the family went along. On their way they talked about where they were going and what happened there. Then they arrived and saw museums, climbed onboard ships and over adobe ruins, and dug for arrowheads. He remembered it all! I remembered nothing from my textbooks, but I did remember that Plains Indians lived in teepees, because our third grade teacher let us build and decorate one on the playground. “Fun” seemed to be a required element of learning, but I realized that the fun must be in context.

I began to experiment with ways of learning through personal experiences that would be meaningful, memorable, and fun. I'm happy to report that it worked! “Discovery Learning” not only reignited my children's interest but also equipped them with the tools to become self-motivated learners for a lifetime.



### Why Discovery Learning Works

Researchers tell us we remember only ten percent of what we read and twenty percent of what we hear. If that's true, how effective is it to assign chapters in a textbook and then lecture on them?

Fortunately, that same research shows that when students are engaged in learning—when they participate and experience a subject by seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and getting their hands dirty—retention jumps to seventy percent! If

students then have an opportunity to share their experience with others, they will remember up to ninety percent of what they've learned!

### HERE'S WHY:

#### ***Discovery Learning becomes a personal experience.***

No longer is history, for example, something that happened to someone they didn't even know. The things each student experiences happen to them!

#### ***Discovery Learning happens in context.***

If students learn fractions by altering a favorite recipe, they understand their usefulness. If they learn about electricity by touching a Leyden jar, they feel the jolt of scientific comprehension. If they learn about cultural history through field trips, they understand not only what happened but why it happened and how it changed things.

#### ***Discovery Learning encourages students to take ownership of their own educational process.***

They learn to be curious and how to find answers to their own questions. They get excited when they discover something new. They become an “authority” and enjoy sharing their excitement with others.

## HOW TO TEACH USING DISCOVERY LEARNING

- Start by telling stories and asking questions—preferably stories about real people and real events. Read “real” books and news articles (as opposed to textbooks). Pictures always help to keep things interesting and “real.”
- Make use of technological tools: quality websites, movies, documentaries. There are online demonstrations for just about any topic, and even YouTube (when you prescreen) can be a great resource for short presentations.
- Visit museums, parks, and landmarks. Go to the theater. Hear a symphony.
- Join clubs or associations where students can build relationships with others who share their interests. Consider an apprenticeship if their interest is genuine and long lasting.
- Allow time for students to explore related topics, following leads where their interests take them.
- Whenever possible, teach with real experiences and follow up with real-life projects for skill development.
- Invite students to discuss and think critically about what they learn, and guide them to see how it fits into a Christian worldview.

Learning by personal discovery allows knowledge to take root in understanding and to grow into wisdom as students begin to grasp the depth and breadth and height of a subject instead of merely memorizing and repeating facts.

Discovery Learning helped our children become eager lifelong learners. What surprised us is how Discovery Learning also changed our lives and our family for the better. In the context of our faith, I believe that as we diligently taught our children “as we sat down and as we rose up and as we walked along the way,” God was teaching us using the same method.



*Lynn Dean was a reluctant historian. Bored with schoolbooks that chronicled battle dates and dead people, she feared inflicting mind-numbing data on her own students. Fortunately, she discovered the classic appeal of storytelling--adventure sagas about real people who struggled to overcome obstacles while pursuing their dreams. For more than a decade Lynn has combined unit studies, field trips, and quality literature to create unique and memorable experiences in discovery learning.*

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# COMBATTING ALITERACY

by Andy Sherrod

I have a tendency to be aliterate—just like lot of other guys. We know how to read but when we have a little spare time you won't find us curled up with a good book.

## *Why?*

Because, of all the books in print, only a few contain literary components that interest us.

**T**he fastest path to active literacy is for a boy to grow up seeing Dad reading at home. (Clark) But that doesn't always work, even if Dad is an avid reader. Objective research shows that there are at least four literary components of a good "boy" book. By screening books you've read through the sieve of these four components, you may find a few that your aliterate boy reader is willing to tackle and thereby point him toward the path to active literacy.

### **LITERARY COMPONENT NUMBER ONE: A BOYISH PROTAGONIST**

Researchers at the University of Georgia assessed the reading preferences of preschool children. (Kropp) It should come as no surprise that the males in the study preferred stories about boys doing boy activities, but their second choice was a girl doing a boy activity—implying that boy readers will tolerate a girl protagonist as long as she is doing something boyish.

Richard Peck, in *Here Lies the Librarian*, makes his readers deduce that Peewee, the main character, is a male, though Peck never uses a single masculine pronoun in the first two chapters. Yet at the end of Chapter Two, Peck surprises his readers by exposing Peewee as the 14-year-old girl protagonist, Eleanor McGrath. Boys are willing to continue reading because they are invested in Peewee's boyish antics.

### **LITERARY COMPONENT NUMBER TWO: THE RIGHT KIND OF CONFLICT**

In another study second-grade boys, when asked to write a story, chose to have their protagonists act alone, while the girls' writing tended to focus on joint action and on protagonists who worked to stay connected to their friends. (Newkirk) Second-grade girls tended to choose primary territories for their story settings—places such as home, school, parents, and friends—familiar places with familiar people. Boys chose secondary territories such as wars, professions, and outer space. (Newkirk) The preferences did not change with age. In a study of freshmen college students who were asked to write about themselves, males tended to write about physical challenges that built confidence and in which they acted individually. Women tended to write about relationships. (Newkirk) These findings imply that boys are interested in characters who 1) act alone, 2) act in unfamiliar places, and 3) overcome physical challenges.

### LITERARY COMPONENT NUMBER THREE: AUTHENTICITY, ESPECIALLY IN THE PORTRAYAL OF EMOTIONS

"Big boys don't cry," according to Western culture. But boys (and men) know that sometimes big boys do cry. Therefore, portraying grief on the page authentically is critical. Author Graham Salisbury portrays grief through brevity in his World War II story, *Under the Blood Red Sun*. Two boys have lost a mutual friend in the aftermath of the Pearl Harbor bombing.

"I saw him wipe his eyes with the back of his hand. I knew what he was feeling." (Salisbury)

And so does the reader. He isn't forced to endure an entire page of explanation. Salisbury makes the point—and then mercifully moves on.

### LITERARY COMPONENT NUMBER FOUR: FACTS AND INFORMATION

Research suggests that boys are also attracted to books offering facts and information. (Sullivan; Oakhill) Biographies of favorite sports stars satisfy this attraction. Michelle Torrey is a master at embedding facts in her science detective series for early readers. (Torrey)

### CONCLUSION

Your aliterate boy reader won't be attracted to all genres. Try to find books with these four literary components, and he will likely discover that voluntary reading is worth his time.

### REMEMBER

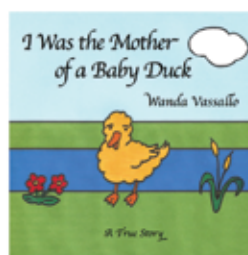
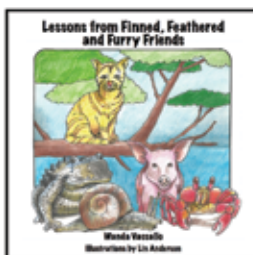
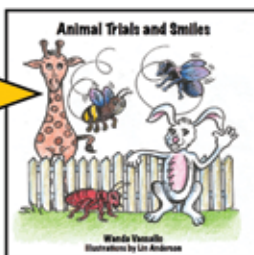
- If the protagonist is not "relatable," aliterate readers lose interest; a boyish protagonist is necessary.
- If the plot is not engaging, aliterate readers lose interest; a particular approach to problem solving is critical.
- If the male relationships—particularly male emotions—are not authentic, aliterate readers lose interest; authenticity must ring true.
- If the knowledge gained isn't worth the time investment, aliterate readers lose interest; facts and information are important.



After he and his wife finished home schooling their five children, Andy Sherrod received an MFA in Writing for Children and Young Adults. He wrote his thesis on "Combating Aliteracy: Crafting Books That Interest Boys." Today Andy is a writer, a public speaker, and a grandfather. He is also the general manager of a commercial pecan farm in Central Texas.



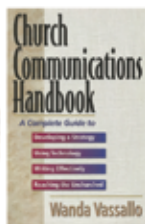
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***"A school-age child residing in the State of Texas who is being educated in a bona fide manner by the parents..."***

**T**hat's the first phrase in the ruling by Judge Murray as he describes the rights and responsibilities of home school parents in Texas.

As a Texan I have read this ruling many times. I can spout off the main points to new home schoolers quite easily. There is not much required of us: We are to teach grammar, reading, spelling, math, and good citizenship. While "good citizenship" can leave you scratching your head, the other required subjects are pretty self-explanatory.

But what about the phrase, "bona fide manner"? Further explanation on THSC's website ([thsc.org/homeschooling-in-texas/state-requirements](http://thsc.org/homeschooling-in-texas/state-requirements)) notes, "not a sham." This simple phrase describes the difficult part of home schooling. It puts the responsibility of the quality of children's education squarely on the parents' shoulders. We can't blame someone else for the quality of our "school." It is all up to us—individually.

As I have observed home schoolers go about educating their children, I have been sadly surprised by the lack of attention to this phrase by some people. Educating children is hard work. While we have been given much freedom to educate our children the way we see fit, we have a huge responsibility to see that it actually gets done. We must be consistent and diligent to ensure our children are not slighted. In our zeal to ensure that our parental rights are not hampered, we must not forget that our children are totally dependent on us to educate them.

I'm all for having a relaxed home school, taking advantage of opportunities to make memories with our children through spontaneous fun days and including our children in non-academic activities such as caring for the sick and elderly, but

we must put the education of our children high on our priority list. If we find that we are having trouble getting school done with our kids, we need to step back and figure out why. We must adjust our schedules, drop outside activities, and determine that we will home school in a bona fide manner.

What do I mean by "adjust our schedules"? It could mean something as simple as getting everyone to bed at a reasonable time so everyone (mom included) is rested in the morning. It could mean that a definite start time for formal schooling is established so that it gets done every day. It could mean that the teaching parent must give up a hobby or a job or other activity. Let's get serious about what is really taking up our time and be honest enough to make the changes necessary.

"Drop outside activities?" Aren't they one of the joys of home schooling? Co-ops, field trips, clubs, lessons, sports, jobs, etc.—these are all good things in which we want our kids to participate. How could they hinder our home school? We can have our kids involved in so many activities that there is not enough time for them to do the work necessary to learn. Our kids can be so over-scheduled that they don't have the time to quiet their minds and think on the things they are learning. They can be involved in so many "adult-directed" activities they never learn to be self-motivated learners. We need to guard our children's free time so they don't become over involved in outside activities.

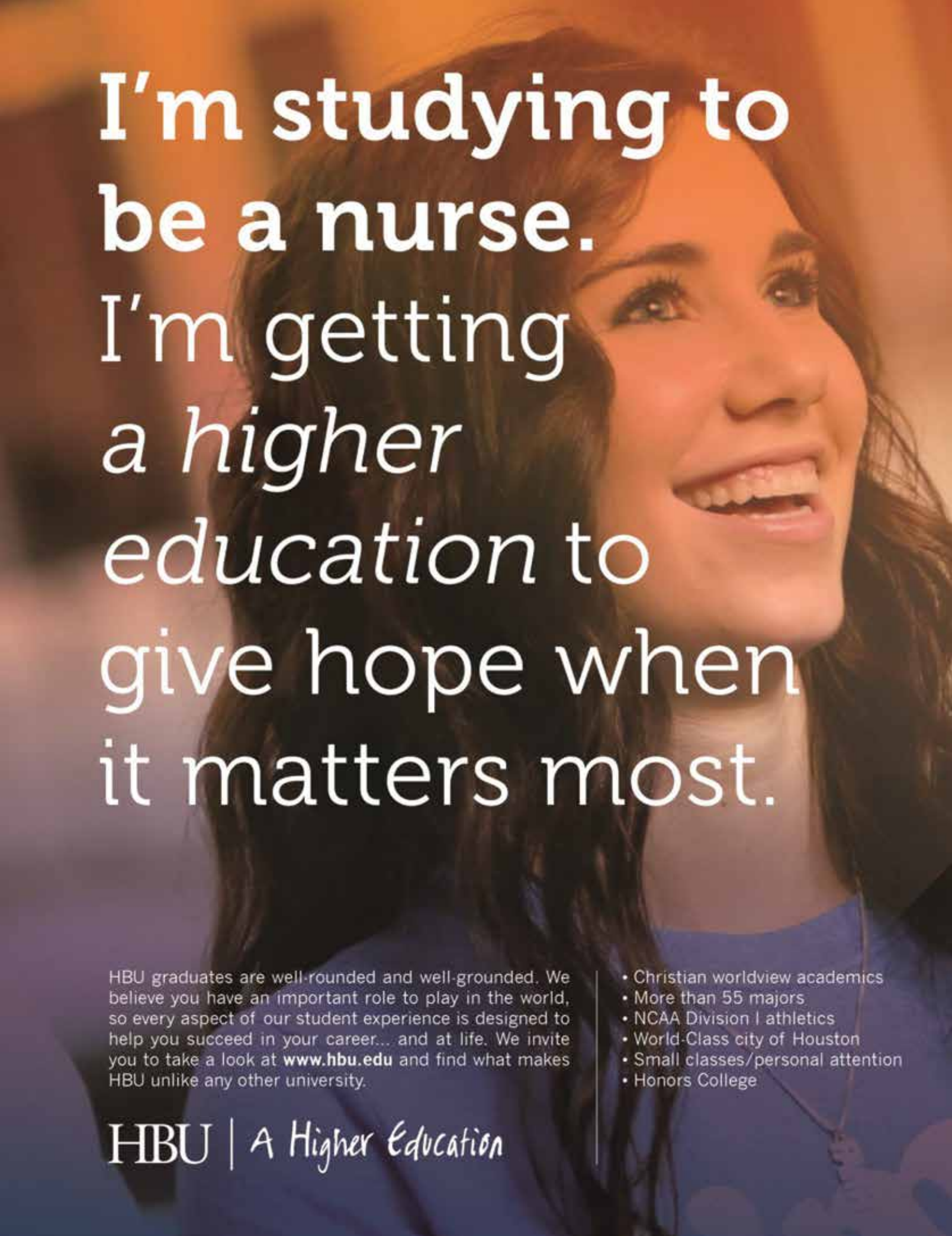
We must determine that we will home school in a bona fide manner by being consistent, by providing the educational materials necessary so our children can learn, and by providing a calm and relaxed atmosphere so our children are not distracted with excessive noise, clutter, and activity. We should not just talk about it, not just plan it, not just want to do a good job—we must do it.

Home schooling is not easy. It is probably one of the most time-consuming, brain-draining, difficult things we could do. It is also one of the most rewarding. But if we don't do it in a bona fide manner, we are only cheating our kids and ourselves. So get busy and get it done!

***"Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might. . ."***  
***(Ecclesiastes 9:10)***



*Diana Dow is a home school mom of six boys who has just started her 23rd year of home schooling. She has a blog at: [dandidow.com](http://dandidow.com)*



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# Having an Attitude of Gratitude

by Lyndsay Lambert

In recent years there have been several studies that revealed that having a grateful attitude can positively impact one's life. During a study conducted at UC Berkley, researchers found that people who practice gratitude consistently report a host of benefits such as:

- Stronger immune systems and lower blood pressure
- Higher levels of positive emotions
- More joy, optimism, and happiness
- Acting with more generosity and compassion
- Feeling less lonely and isolated

## A New York Times November 11, 2011, article on the topic summarizes the current studies:

*"Cultivating an 'attitude of gratitude' has been linked to better health, sounder sleep, less anxiety and depression, higher long-term satisfaction with life, and kinder behavior toward others."*

I am sure these are things we would all like to experience consistently in our lives and in the lives of our children!

Gratitude does not come naturally for us, especially in an affluent society such as ours. How do we go about developing an attitude of gratitude? How do we encourage it in our children?

## God addressed this issue in His Word:

*Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*

-1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NKJV)

*Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in*

*everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*  
-Philippians 4:4-7 (NKJV)

## There are a couple of interesting points about these passages:

- Both of these passages start off telling us to rejoice always. I believe that being able to rejoice is tied closely to the ability to give thanks.
- They are commands, not suggestions.

I have had friends who, when going through hard times, looked for good things in those situations for which they could be grateful. In fact, that is one of the suggestions the researchers made that can help us grow in gratitude. I think it is a great idea, and I am impressed by people who do it.

I also think, however, based on 1 Thessalonians 5:18, that we need to take gratitude a step further. That verse says, "... in everything give thanks. ..." I think that means we are to give thanks in, well, everything—even the hard things and the things we consider bad.

God has a different perspective than we have. He says in Romans 8:28, "... all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." (NKJV) We like to memorize that verse because it is very comforting. However, we rarely memorize verse 29, which says, "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." God's goal (His good) for us is to be conformed to the image of His Son. That process is not always comfortable or pleasant. In fact, I believe God often uses what we think of as bad to conform us to the image of His Son. Therefore, in God's economy, it is actually good.

I am sad to say that thanking God is not usually my first response to things I do not like—even though I have known these principles for years. However, when I think about God and Who He is, when I choose to obey Philippians 4:6 and, rather than being anxious, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, make my requests known to God, the peace that He gives me (as promised in Philippians 4:7) is nothing short of amazing!

### **What If We Do Not Feel Thankful?**

In our culture much importance is placed on our feelings in fact, I think, far too much. I do not think God is concerned about how we feel about obeying; He just tells us to do it. Besides, the good news is that God is not commanding us to feel thankful; He says to give thanks. What is the difference? Feeling thankful is an act of our emotions; giving thanks is an act of our will.

Being able to give thanks is not dependent upon our feelings but upon God's character. When we give thanks to God, we are in essence recognizing that:

- God is good.

"No one is good but One, that is, God." (Matthew 19:17, NKJV)

- He is in control.

God is the Blessed Controller of all things. (I Timothy 6:15, Phillips)

- He loves me.

"In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (I John 4:10, NKJV)

If any of these aspects were not true about God, you could neither trust Him nor honestly thank Him.

There have been many circumstances in which I did not want to give thanks—even when I knew I did not have to feel thankful to do it and even after reminding myself about these verses and these qualities of God. In fact, I have been a bit like Fonzie. (Remember Fonzie from "Happy Days," a sitcom from the 1970s and '80s?) When trying to say he had been wrong he would stutter, "I was wr . . . wr . . . wr . . . wr . . ." Except, I say, "Th . . . th . . . th . . . th . . ." sometimes when trying to thank God for something for which I do not feel thankful.

It was in going through this process once that I came to realize that, for me, saying "thank You" was a "sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips. . . ." (Hebrews 13:15) You see, a sacrifice is giving something that costs us. When we are going through things that we do not like, the act of obeying by giving thanks can cost us. How? By giving thanks we are submitting to God, giving up our desires, telling Him that we are willing to have His will in our lives, and even recognizing that what He has for us is for our best. In short, we are trusting God.

After all, if God has a goal for us, it must be good! He is using these things for which we have a hard time thanking Him to conform us to the image of His Son (Romans 8:28-29).

And that is good.

### **Suggestions for Developing an Attitude of Gratitude**

- **Consistently perform good deeds and acts of service.**

Focusing on the needs of others and taking action to help promote feelings of gratitude in our own lives.

- **Learn to delay gratification by waiting for something as well as by contributing in some way toward obtaining it.**

Doing so usually leads to a higher valuing of what we get and more gratitude for it.

- **Discipline yourself to be intentionally grateful; establish times when you choose to focus on gratitude.**

- **Keep a gratitude journal daily.**

- **Expand your repertoire of things for which you can be grateful such as:**

- Relationships
- Beauty in nature
- Opportunities
- Experiences
- Future hopes
- Difficult past moments (Reviewing can bring wisdom, perspective, and even direction to our lives.)

- **Several times per day acknowledge different things you appreciate.**

- **Make an effort to express appreciation to others, like store clerks, janitors, and family members.**

- **Develop a gratitude ritual at a consistent time each day when you gather with others.** For example, ask each person present at dinnertime to reflect on his day and share things he appreciates.

Wouldn't it be great if we were filled with gratitude for such things as the smell of good food, the laughter of a child, the beauty of a smile, and the value of something newly learned? Developing an attitude of gratitude is a gift to ourselves and to our children that will have a lifelong impact and will never stop blessing our lives.

*Condensed from article by Dr. Kim Lodewyk at [heritageprofessional.com](http://heritageprofessional.com)*



*Lyndsay, a graduate of Texas Tech University, home schooled her four now-grown children for 16 years. She has assisted Tim, her husband of more than 40 years, in serving the home school community, first in helping to start and lead their local support group and then, from 1990 to 2013, in running the Texas Home School Coalition, the statewide organization committed to serving and protecting Texas home schoolers. She "retired" in 2013 to have more time to be a grandmother to her five grandchildren and to be the "older woman" that she believes God has called her to be. Visit her blog, "From an Older Woman," at [romanolderwoman.com/](http://romanolderwoman.com/).*

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# Ye Olde Merrie Shakespeare Class

by Katy Huth Jones

When my youngest was 12 and became an only child because his brother went away to college, I offered to teach a Shakespeare class for older students for our local home school group. With my oldest son, I'd discovered that simply reading Shakespeare's plays was boring, so I wanted to make this class more interesting.

For the first class I dressed in costume. With a CD of Elizabethan songs playing, I gave an overview of Shakespeare's life and times, passed out a partial list of the more than 2000 words Shakespeare "invented," and had the students work a quiz I found online comparing Shakespeare to the King James Version of the Bible.

Since Shakespeare's plays were meant to be performed, I assigned parts to each of the students and had them proceed through the plays scene by scene. I had them use different voices or wear full or partial costumes—even just a hat to get into the part.

I found books written with the original language alongside a modern version but quickly discovered I needed to "edit" a few places where the words became unnecessarily crude. Other than that, these books became the perfect introduction for students who'd not been exposed to Shakespeare. In our dramatic readings, the younger students could read the "easier" side and still follow along with the older students, who read from the original side.

As unfamiliar words appeared, we'd define them, so the class increased its vocabulary with each play. Most of the time, however, the students could guess a word's meaning from the context, which painlessly helped with SAT prep.

We all had so much fun that for the next 10, even after my youngest graduated, Shakespeare became a fixture in our home school group. Each year we did a dramatic reading of two or three plays. Eventually my spare closet filled with costumes bought or donated, and the boys especially liked reenacting sword fights. For the Battle of Agincourt in "Henry V," our class marched down to the nearby creek and fought along its banks.



### My weekly assignments included:

1. Write a newspaper article about a character or event in the play, written in Shakespeare's style.
2. Write an essay comparing or contrasting characters or events.
3. Rewrite a scene from the play in another place or time.  
(This assignment was such a favorite we would act them out.)
4. Design a coat of arms for one of the families in the play.
5. Write a love poem from one character to another. It can be a sonnet or any other form.
6. Summarize the story from Greek mythology mentioned by the characters, since those references which were common in Shakespeare's time may not be familiar today.
7. Find or draw a map of the country/ area in which the play is set.
8. Find an example of a modern day malapropism, or make up one of your own.
9. Try to improve on one of Shakespeare's weird and crazy "insults."  
(This was another favorite.)
10. Memorize a short monologue and perform it for the class as preparation for an audition.

We took "field trips" whenever Shakespeare plays were produced nearby, and we visited the Texas Renaissance Festival more than once—in costume, of course. It was a joy to watch young, shy students, who only wanted the smallest parts, gradually become more comfortable with "acting" and eventually ask for larger parts in other plays. This happened so often it was worth all the time and effort. In fact, some went on to act in local community theatre, having developed the confidence to do so in our little Shakespeare class.

At the end of each play I made a "certificate" for the students. This is the wording on one I did for "Macbeth":

*The hurlyburly's done, the battle's lost and won  
So now 'tis time to receive thy Hokey Certificate proving that  
(name)  
Didst participate in Shakespeare's Tragic Play  
Macbeth  
With very little toil and trouble.*



Katy Jones home schooled for 25 years not only her two sons but hundreds of other children in Shakespeare, creative writing, music, public speaking, and science. Now Katy is a working children's author and plays piccolo and flute in "The Symphony of the Hills." She and her husband Keith live in Kerrville and are blessed to be called Grandma and Grandpa.



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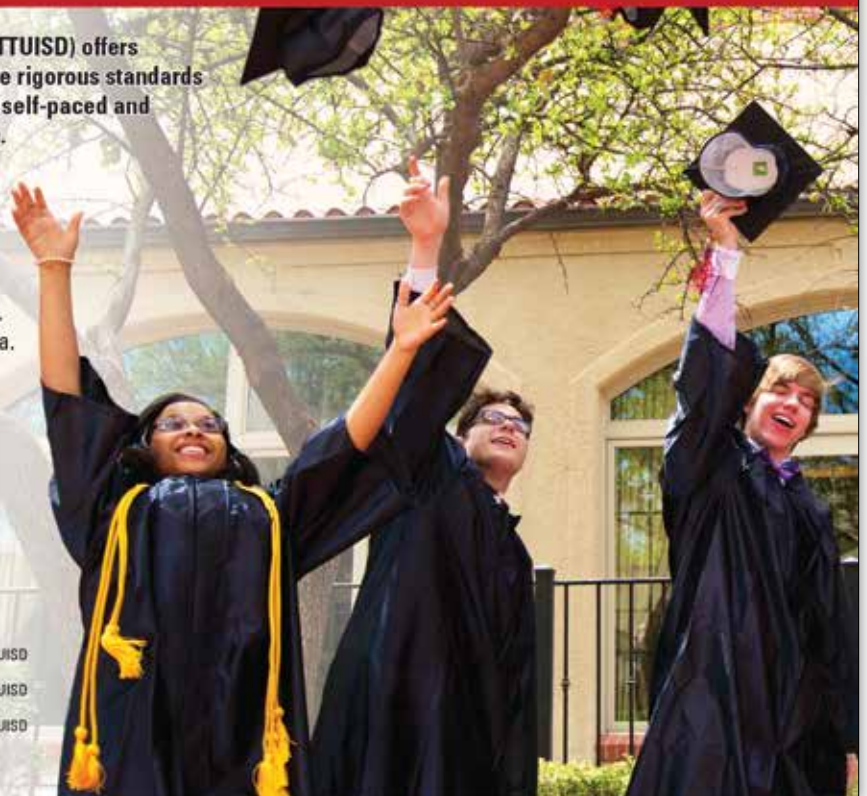
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# Preparing and Releasing

by Barbara LaDue

## ***For everything there is a season.***

These are words that can really impact, and I am being impacted now. My season of home schooling is drawing toward an end. My youngest is a senior in high school and we are looking at the last year of home schooling children.

There are many who cannot see far down the road. For years, I would only commit to one year of home schooling at a time. The task of what I needed to do for the future years seemed too daunting. What science or math? How would we figure out a transcript? College applications? Therefore, I worked one year at a time. I started by keeping the standard school schedule-just so I had summers to study what was the upcoming challenge for me.

What advice can I share with younger moms? Try to relax. Enjoy your kids now. They are gone too soon! The Lord promises us guidance:

***"If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you."***  
(James 1:5 NIV)

And

***"Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and He will establish your plans."*** (Prov. 16:3 NIV).

## ***Allow Him to be in control.***

I have always been a person with list of things to do and accomplish. Letting this trait be modified was my first lesson in changing to meet the needs of the family we had chosen. I struggle with it still. While the kids were in elementary academics, I could meet my need by finding projects for us that accomplished my goals-and theirs as well. Then in the middle school academic years we added outside interests (piano, soccer, etc.), and that pushed my lists of things I wanted to do down to things I needed to do in the high school years. I didn't need to teach them as much as guide and tutor them. Wow, I thought, more time for my projects. However, I found I was still busy as we added the support group and co-op activities to the list of music lessons and sports activities. I had now moved into what I call the "Soccer Mom Era" which kept me busy. But alas, my daughter graduated home school and went away to college. And now, my son is coming to the end of his schooling. Sadly for me, he drives himself everywhere now.

I am starting the prep work for graduation already. Our home school co-op does a group graduation ceremony. (This was great with in-laws who commiserated with us that my oldest was missing a graduation like her cousins got. They were amazed with our "little group ceremony"-nice and personal.) For this I need photographs.

These photos are leading to various memories that really remind me how precious is our time with our children.

Now, I am challenged to let go. I can rest in the fact that I see my daughter involved with her church at college. I can rest in knowing that the Lord and my son will be facing the future together. Now, I can learn what the next step in my life will be.



*Barbara LaDue grew up in a military family. She married and worked several years before the couple was gifted with children. Her adventure of home schooling is drawing to an end, and she and her husband look forward to seeing what God has planned for their next phase of life.*



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*"You shall not fear them, for it is the Lord your God who fights for you."*

*Hello, God?*

*Hey, how are You? Really? It's good to hear Your voice too! Thanks for taking my call.*

*Yeah, it has been awhile. Oh, I'm fine. Well—not really. That's why I called.*

Life is crazy down here. Guess You already know, don't You? I mean, with You being sovereign and all. Anyway, I know You say I'm supposed to call whenever I want.

Have You seen how many \$100 car batteries and \$200 tires and \$300 emission-control thingies I've replaced this year? We bought "used" cars like Dave Ramsey said so we could be good stewards of Your money. Now it's like those used cars are using us!

And that puppy we got for Halley? Exactly! Right after her ten-year-old dog died. I thought a puppy would help the family get through grieving over Mattie. Except, who knew the puppy would break its leg the same day Belinda had her knee replaced? Look, I understand \$400 for Belinda's x-rays. But \$400 for puppy x-rays? Really?!

So, that's why I'm calling. You know I don't play the lottery. So, could you please just drop a big bag of money on the front porch? Send an angel, drop the bag, ring the bell, fly away. That's all I'm asking.

Anyway, it isn't just the money. It's the craziness I gotta fight while Belinda is in recovery. Did you see what our insurance company did? They pulled the same stunt when Scout was hospitalized. And that hospital—I forget how many times I called to convince them they were "in network" with our insurance company.

Sorry about dumping on you like this. Just wanted to be sure you knew what was happening down here. What worries me? Well—I'm not really "worried"—it's more like—it's like—how am I supposed to pay for all this? And why do I have to fight so hard for my family? What's that? Am I done now? Well, yeah. Sorry. Just needed to vent.

Right. The insurance company did pay for Belinda's surgery. Yeah, the hospital did admit her. Wait—You did what? Seriously? You arranged that? I thought I pestered them with so many calls until they finally—what? Sure, I remember how Belinda's mom stayed alive just long enough for Belinda to get to her bedside. That's because I called fifteen car companies and found the last rental car available

from Waco to Dallas on a Sunday. You'd think big rental companies would—wait—You found that car for her? Oh. Well sure, I remember Halley's old dog lived just until Halley returned from England. Mattie died the next morning. Next day, we found the perfect puppy because I phoned all those—what? You—You took care of those too?

OK. Look, I'm sorry about my rotten attitude. It's those "dragons." Each time I kill one, another pops up to kill me. I get so tired of fighting, and they don't give up. I just want—what? "If we are faithless, He remains faithful—for He cannot deny Himself." Well, sure, I remember that verse. Paul wrote it to Timothy, didn't he? Seems like he was—what? "One man of you puts to flight a thousand, since it is the LORD your God who fights for you, just as He promised you." Sure, I remember that one too. Seems Joshua spoke this to Israel when they were—when they were tired of fighting their enemies. OK... OK... I get it.

Hey God, my phone is beeping; guess the battery is low. What's that? My kids are watching me fight those dragons? That's how they learn, isn't it? I'm not the best role model, but I'm what they have. More importantly, they have You, don't they?

Sure was good talking with You. Let's do it again. Yeah, soon. Thanks. Love you too! Goodbye.



*Pat and Belinda Harrell have home schooled since 1995. They have five jolly children, and the most blessed house on the block.*

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# Millie Ann Learns



## The Love of Reading

by Jody Smith

I'd been home schooling my son Duncan for three years when my next door neighbor approached me about tutoring her six-year-old daughter. Millie Ann had failed first grade and was unable to read even the simplest of words.

I had my hands full at that time. Duncan was eight years old; our twins, Rachel and Lydia, were five; Sarah was three; and Jesse was a baby. But I could see the misery on Millie Ann's face and felt her sense of failure. I felt sorry for her so I said I'd give it a try.

The first time Millie Ann came over we sat at my kitchen table with the phonics book I'd used with Duncan. He and I had great success with the curriculum, and I was optimistic it would work its magic again. But within a matter of minutes I saw that Millie Ann was completely lost.

Many of the words had pictures under them, and she was guessing the words based on the pictures. For "pan" she guessed, "pot." For "desk" she guessed, "table." I realized we would have to start at the beginning. It would be harder than teaching a child who was brand-new to reading; her habit of guessing needed to be unlearned, and her belief that she couldn't read would have to be overturned.

I told her mother I would spend five minutes a day with her. She just lived next door, so popping over for a few minutes wouldn't be a problem. Her mom was convinced, though, that I should spend a couple of hours with her because Millie Ann was having so much trouble. I told her that was the reason we needed to keep it short. Millie Ann's attention span was next to nothing, and she was finding the whole ordeal to be very painful. We needed to lift her discouragement, and long hours would not help.

Duncan had been an ideal student. He was an auditory learner and understood the phonetic rules and instruction very quickly and effortlessly. But Millie Ann was not an auditory learner. She couldn't grasp the phonetic rules. She was a visual and kinesthetic (hands-on) learner, and I had no experience with teaching such a learner. Over a few days I began to work out a game plan.

I covered the pictures under the words with masking tape to curtail the guessing. I had her mark the vowels long or short in my book so she could "see" how it should sound and could learn kinesthetically through the physical marking of the vowels. If we skipped this part, she was completely in the dark. But when we did this step, she got it right every time.

After five minutes we would close the book, and I would tell her to go play with my kids for a while. Then I would send her home. We did this reading lesson five days a week for the summer. Very slowly, Millie Ann was learning to read. Halfway through the summer I was surprised and pleased to discover that there was an added bonus to what we were doing.

When she first began coming to my house Millie Ann mumbled, didn't make eye contact, and most definitely didn't like books. By the last month of our time together she asked to take the book home with

her overnight. I gave her the book, and she hugged it to her as she went home. The next day she told me about everything she'd found in the back of the book. The child had been reading ahead on her own—for the sheer pleasure of it. When she went back to first grade again in September, it was with a confidence and a love of books that neither her mother nor I would have thought possible.

The next year my twin girls were ready to learn to read. Well, not really ready, as I discovered. They were also visual and kinesthetic learners. Fortunately, I'd had my earlier experience with Millie Ann and had some idea of how to approach things with them. All three of them became young people who love books because I had stumbled upon a method of teaching that was suited to their pathways for learning.



*Jody Smith home schooled her five children from kindergarten through high school. She has tutored young children who were failing reading at school and was the leader of the Essex County Association for Homeschoolers in Ontario, Canada, for seven years.*

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# LOVE of Learning

by Amanda Farnsworth

Parents have the privilege of inspiring and encouraging a love of learning in our children. We can create an environment of support in which children can develop their own ideas, express their feelings, take chances, make choices, share their opinions, and—most of all—grow to be strong individuals.

As home schoolers we should create a home environment that invites exploration, creative thinking, and participation in order to have the best quality learning experiences. When you provide plenty of time and space for open-ended play every day, you create opportunities for your child to really feel the joy of learning. It's important to remember that promoting a love of learning is about not only the equipment or activities you provide but also your own joyful, inquisitive attitude toward learning. Remember how it felt to discover a new idea, a new friend, or a new pet? Always try to take that feeling and translate it into your teaching. Let your child see the wonder in everything you teach.

One of the best and easiest ways to deepen your children's learning is to have worthwhile conversations about their daily activities. When you ask valuable questions and invite discussion, you help construct your children's own way of thinking. Remember, it's not just what your child does that matters; it's what you and your child say, think, and feel. Reading books is a great way to engage your child with questions. You can ask something as simple as, "What is in the picture?" to more complicated questions like, "What do you think happens next?" or, "What would you do in that situation?" Books are a great way to have experiences outside of our daily routines.

In addition, by knowing what interests your children and how they learn best, you will be able to help them build skills with their strengths. For example, rather than asking your children to "work on their numbers" when they would rather be playing with blocks, invite them to build a tower "so many blocks high," add and subtract how many blocks they have, create numbers with blocks, or do anything that involves numbers and blocks. Learning how your children learn cuts down on stress for both you and them. Try ideas, and toss them if they don't work for your children or for you. Once you establish their learning styles you can tailor your activities to suit your children's needs.

Finally, don't forget to embrace your own joy of learning. Let your children see you doing something you love. It can be anything: reading, writing, fixing a car, or sewing—whatever you enjoy. Let your kids see that. Let them help you, let them offer suggestions, and let them observe you. When your children see you engaged and happy it will help them be happy in whatever they themselves would like to learn. Plus, you might end up with awesome helpers! So go out and find your love of learning and teaching. Your kids are following you, so set a good example.



*Amanda Farnsworth lives in Hawley with her husband Jerry, their two children, and two cats. When not home schooling kids, cleaning house, or cooking meals, Amanda enjoys reading, gaming, sewing, and movies.*

# Delight-Directed Learning



by Lori Newmann

In our 24 years of home schooling, we have had our ups and downs. The ups have most certainly outnumbered the downs because if they hadn't, we wouldn't be now entering our 25th year! One of the main reasons we began this venture almost a quarter of a century ago (I know, it makes me wince too!) was that by the end of the year we noticed a marked decrease in enthusiasm for "school" or even for learning in our five-year-old son. After watching our oldest child come out of a wonderful private Christian preschool and kindergarten, during his last year there, when he had upped his attendance from three to five mornings a week, my five-year-old, bright boy was showing definite signs of burnout! How could this be?! This was an excellent small school program, and for the previous two years he had flourished. My options were limited. The funds required for private school would increase significantly the following year, and we didn't have them.

That is about the time my God-ordained acquaintance with Sally became a friendship, and God began leading our family through this amazing journey.

I was substitute teaching the preschool class for Sally while she was needed for another project in our small fellowship. She briefly gave me a quick tutorial on the lesson for the day: "God made the stars. God made the sky and God made me." We discussed the wonders of God's creation, and how we enjoyed watching the stars come out at night, when Sally's son Patrick enthusiastically jumped in, not only explaining to us that God created the stars in the sky but also proceeding to explain the scientific principals behind how He did it!

*"If you look up into the southern sky right now, you can see what looks like a star, but isn't. It's a planet. It's the planet Mars. Mars is a red planet. You can tell it is a planet and not a star because when you look at it really closely you can see that it doesn't twinkle like stars do. Stars twinkle because of our atmosphere. You can also see Jupiter right now. It has lots of rings around it made of space dust and ice, but you can't see the rings unless you have a telescope, which we do."*

Wow! I felt a little out of my league here. I had come prepared to share about God's creation but little four-yr-old Patrick was sharing the science behind His creation! When debriefing about the class with Sally I mentioned Patrick's remarkable contributions to our discussion, and she casually remarked, "Oh, I guess he's picked up more than I thought."

"Excuse me?" I questioned. "You didn't teach him that on purpose?!"

"Oh no," she smiled. "His older sisters are studying the solar system right now, and I guess he's picking up on more of it than I realized."

My mind was reeling. How could a preschooler unintentionally pick up on scientific concepts and details many middle school students would be hard pressed to learn, understand, and convey? The answer was very simple: Patrick still had his God-given love of learning. It had not yet been destroyed by a public school system that rewards mediocrity and teaches to the status quo.

It is important to understand that although Patrick was a bright child, he was not unusually so. Sally had not set him at a desk and ordered him to "pay attention," hoping he would pick up on the scientific nuances of his siblings' lessons. The family was actively reading about, discussing, and creating scale models of the solar system while Patrick quietly played with his trucks and Legos in the same room. Patrick, to untrained eyes, was not even paying attention to the discussions going on around him, yet he retained a remarkable amount of information because it was what his family was doing together at the time.

Contrast Sally and Patrick's story with my friend Dee's (not her real name). Dee is an excellent mother; she waited more than 15 years for the Lord to bring her a child. Number 2 came along a few years later. She asked me one day what I did to "motivate" my children to learn. I was a little surprised by her question because at the time Dee's oldest child was only five and the youngest about three. She knew I home schooled and that my older children had gone to highly respected universities. She explained that she planned to home school, had been doing workbook and alphabet pages and games with her children, but the youngest just didn't seem to be motivated at all to learn his alphabet, and the oldest was becoming downright resistant.

I tried to encourage her, as I had been encouraged by the teaching of others, that her children were still so young that she needed to put the workbooks and alphabet away and allow her children to be children and to simply enjoy them. I tried to suggest more "natural" methods of teaching her children: reading to them, allowing them to "help" her as she went about her daily routine, turning setting the table into a counting game, etc. Sadly, as a former "teacher" she had been programmed that children needed to be doing specific "school activities" in order to be learning. This couldn't be further from the truth. Another dear lady who had successfully home schooled her children all the way through high school attempted to encourage Dee to "relax" and enjoy the process. Not surprisingly, Dee and her children were burned out on the entire home schooling journey before her oldest reached first grade, and her children were soon enrolled in a private Christian school where Dee now volunteers.

When I imagined home schooling prior to meeting Sally's family, I had imagined stacks of textbooks—spelling, math, social studies, science, and reading—similar to those I had been raised on in the public school system. The thought of having to get through a stack of dry textbooks every day with my children made me literally sick to my stomach. Sally showed me another way. She introduced me to "living books" curricula and the writings of Ruth Beechick, Charlotte Mason, and Raymond and Dorothy Moore. She loaned me books and the curriculum she used. After reading it cover to cover in a few hours, I enthusiastically announced, "If this is home schooling, I can do this!" No textbooks? Well, except for math, but even there I had wonderfully interactive choices that I knew would teach my children to reason and think, not just find the correct answer.

You see, children are born with an innate sense of wonder—a desire to explore, learn, and discover. They ask questions relentlessly. This is a God-given natural curiosity that should be nurtured, not inhibited. Unfortunately, most institutional learning settings—public, private, or Christian—are not set up to reward or encourage the curious. Well-meaning parents can kill this wonder in their own children by burdening them with daunting schedules and rigid academics before the individual children, created as individual beings by God, are physically, mentally, or emotionally ready.

## So, how can you as a parent nurture and not destroy that wonderful love of learning?

Learning is a natural process. Set up a learning environment, and get out of the way! You will be amazed at what they can learn on their own with minimal guidance from you.

Our family learned years ago that one of the greatest teachers is experiential learning. Some call this delight-directed studies, a process promoted years ago by modern home schooling pioneer Gregg Harris. We enjoy doing this type of learning especially during summertime, when we take a break from our more formal studies and the kids are encouraged to "pick a subject, any subject" to study. It is remarkable what can be learned when children are free to study something of their own choosing. Many of these studies have led to lifelong enjoyment, careers, and hobbies for my now-grown children. There is so much freedom here that can take many forms, whether it is going to a farm to understand biology or going to Rome to understand Ancient History and marvel at the skill of the ancient Roman engineers. Our family has turned vacations into giant family learning experiences. From studying tide pools before heading to the beach, the geology and wildlife of Yellowstone, or the architecture of ancient cathedrals, the more my children were familiar with the places where we were headed, the more excited they were about seeing it in person when we finally got there. When walking through Ephesus in Turkey last year, my then-11-yr-old marveled, "I've dreamed of seeing this my whole life!"

Limit, and I mean severely limit, screen time. Television, computers, gaming systems—all are taking hours of your child's time that could and should be used to explore, discover, read, experiment, etc. This task can be difficult in a world where everyone seems to be permanently connected to a digital device, and I am not suggesting a complete throwback to the 1950s, but numerous studies are showing that it doesn't matter how educational or learning-oriented the digital media is, children around the world are suffering mentally, physically, academically, and emotionally from too much screen time. You have the power to change that in your own home.

Don't force them to learn information for which they are not yet ready. So what if your neighbor's child, seven months younger than yours, has been reading for two years already? If your child hasn't been plopped in front of a television or video game for most of his waking hours, he or she is probably just as advanced in other areas, like Lego construction, fort building, or mud sculpture. With gentle guidance, when they are ready the reading will come—especially if you are reading together.

Teach is an action verb. If your children are middle school age or older, there will be some subjects at which they excel and some that challenge them. Look for new ways to engage them that might arouse

their curiosity in the subjects that are more challenging. If they are insistent that their science text is “so boring” they can’t read another paragraph, try to find some more interactive ways of pursuing the same subject. Avail yourself of the growing number of experienced, successful home schoolers, and seek guidance from them. There are some wonderful, fascinating interactive science videos and online resources that should have them going, “Wow!” in no time. Not every aspect of learning will necessarily be compelling (polynomials, anyone?), but ask yourself, “How would I like to learn this? Where is there a concrete example of this that would make more sense?” You started home schooling to give your child a quality education, right? Sometimes it takes more action on our part than we want to give at the time, but, trust me, once you and your child have successfully navigated a tricky subject, you will both be grateful you put forth the effort.

If you’ve been stuck in a home schooling rut and both you and your children cringe at the word “curriculum,” DROP WHAT YOU ARE USING AND CHANGE IT! There are so many wonderful sources out there. They may be different than what you have been using or what you were raised on, but find something that excites you and your kids. Bite the bullet, accept that whatever isn’t working may have been a mistake, and change direction. Can you imagine your child’s reaction if you (I’m speaking especially to you Type A moms out there) walked in tomorrow morning and instead of giving your children “the look” that translates, “Why aren’t you working yet?” you looked at them and said, “You know, I’ve been thinking, I don’t think X has been working so well for us, so we’re going to drop it for now. You don’t have to do X any more. I am going to find something that works better for us instead.” If you feel a sense of relief even thinking about it, then you probably need to do it.

There is so much help available to you. Use your resources, which are numerous. I’ve even included a list of books at the end of this article that encouraged me and helped to give me perspective. Remember, the Creator of the universe is the One who created your child and decided you should be his parent. If He gave you the responsibility, He’ll guide your steps if you will seek His guidance. Pray about it. Find other successful home schoolers to advise you. I promise you, there are no long-term, accomplished home schoolers who haven’t been through some, if not many, tough challenges with their children, and I haven’t met one yet who isn’t willing to help guide others down the same road.

**Additional Reading Suggestions:** anything written by Ruth Beechick, *Home Style Teaching* by Raymond and Dorothy Moore, *Home Grown Kids* by Raymond and Dorothy Moore, *For the Children’s Sake: Foundations of Education for Home and School* by Susan Schaeffer Macaulay—this is the one that introduced me to and beautifully summarizes Charlotte Mason’s methodology.



*Lori and her husband Scott are entering their 25th year of home education. They have graduated their oldest three from their home school, all of whom went on to become university graduates. They are still home schooling their 12-yr-old, midlife blessing. Lori is a founding director of Dallas Christian Home Educators’ Scholastic Cooperative and is now co-owner and director of E-Tours, International ([www.E-Tours.biz](http://www.E-Tours.biz)), which specializes in organizing educational tours around the world.*

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# I Was a Foolish Woman

by Lori Hatcher



In my early days of parenting I was a foolish woman.

**P**rimarily a stay-at-home mom, and then later a home schooling mother, I spent a lot of time with my children. It gave me the opportunity to teach and train them, imparting valuable life skills as we moved through our days together. I had the privilege of modeling the behavior I hoped they would incorporate into their lives. "Values are more often caught than taught," I'd heard, and I believed it.

I'd watch my eldest daughter reading to my toddler and think, She's going to be such a great mom one day.

I'd catch the youngest girl encouraging her stuffed animal in a voice that sounded very much like mine. Shaking her pint-sized finger, she'd say, "You need to eat all the squash on your plate, Lillie Bear, so you can be strong and healthy." These lessons are sinking in, I'd think.

Then came the day when I heard my daughter mumble as she tripped over her daddy's shoes, "Men are so lazy. They never pick up after themselves." It sent chills up my spine to hear my words coming out of my young daughter's mouth. She had nailed perfectly the accompanying tone of disgust and disrespect.

In a moment of Holy Spirit enlightenment I realized that while my kind and gentle words were making an impression on my daughters, so also were the careless and destructive ones.

*"The wise woman builds her house, but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down,"* says Proverbs 14:1.

Without intending to, I realized I had been tearing down their father and undermining their respect for him. It was a frightening realization, because I knew we seldom obey those we disrespect. We discard their teaching, ignore their examples, and defy their authority. Their instruction is meaningless and impotent. Without intending to, I had begun to sow seeds of disrespect and rebellion in my daughters' hearts by tearing down their father within their hearing.

That day marked a major turning point in our home.

From then on I made a concerted effort to say only those things that were edifying. I talked about how hard working and dedicated their daddy was and how much he loved his family. I pointed out the choices he made that they wouldn't have otherwise noticed—how he would rather be home with us than out on the golf course, or how he drove the old car without air conditioning so we could drive the comfortable, newer one. Within their hearing I expressed my thankfulness that he cared more about his wife staying home to raise his daughters than working to have a bigger house and expensive vacations.

That day years ago I witnessed how my words had the power to build up and the power to tear down. With God's help, I committed to build my home on the foundation of love and respect I had for my husband.

How about you? Do you struggle with your words? Have you, intentionally or unintentionally, torn down your husband in the presence of your children? If you have, it's never too late to change. May I suggest the following steps?

**1. Confess and repent.**

Agree with God that you have sinned against Him by disrespecting your husband. Ask Him to forgive and change you. God always answers this prayer (1 John 1:9).

**2. Confess to your husband first and then to your children.**

Tell them how God has convicted your heart and that you desire to change. Ask them to forgive and hold you accountable (James 5:16).

**3. Pray every day,**

inviting God to make the words of your mouth and the meditation of your heart acceptable in His sight (Psalm 19:14).

**4. Replace critical thoughts with thankful ones.**

Instead of thinking, He's so sloppy; he always drops his shoes in the doorway when he gets home from work, think instead, I'm so thankful I have a husband who works hard every day. And I'm thankful he comes home to us every evening. As we learn to think rightly, we'll also learn to speak rightly (Luke 6:45).

**5. When you mess up, and you will, repeat steps 1-4.**



*Lori Hatcher is a 17-year home schooling veteran and author of the devotional book *Joy in the Journey – Encouragement for Homeschooling Moms*. A women's ministry speaker, Lori shares five-minute devotions for busy women on her blog *Hungry for God... Starving for Time* ([www.lorihatcher.com](http://www.lorihatcher.com)).*

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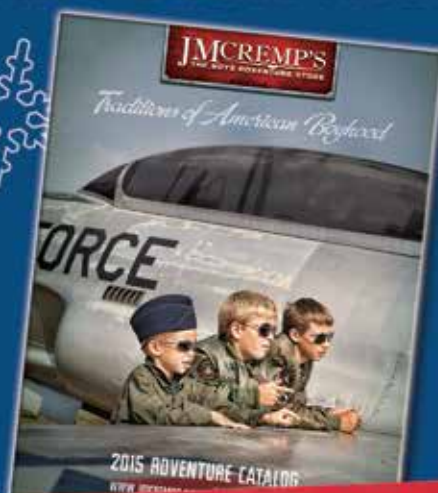
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***What format should it take?***

***What is the best way to organize the information?***

***How do I calculate the grade point averages?***

I had these thoughts and more when I was faced with creating a transcript for my oldest son upon his graduation in 2007, until I discovered Teascript ([www.teascript.com](http://www.teascript.com)). Created by software developer Matthew Bass, who was himself home educated, this transcript creation program was exactly what I needed. I have always been of the mindset that if there is something out there that will work for my needs, I don't need to reinvent the wheel.

***Teascript offers three levels of usage: basic, family, and school.***

#### **basic**

Basic transcripts are available **free** of charge, so if one is really strapped for cash, a very nice transcript can still be prepared for one's child. The basic edition contains a watermark and limits how many credits and exams can be included in the transcript.

#### **family**

The family edition is **\$5 per month** and allows home educators to develop and create personalized transcripts for all of their students. In the family transcript program, courses can be categorized by subject or year and can be designated as honors, AP, or dual enrollment courses. Exams taken and scores of those exams have an area for notation on the transcript, as do extracurricular activities, and any other items of note.

#### **school**

Small schools can subscribe for **\$49 per month**, which allows the school to create transcripts for up to 300 students, and add a school logo.

The completed transcript is generated as an Adobe PDF, which can be printed in portrait or landscape layout. I first joined Teascript when the only choice was to print in portrait layout. When the option to print landscape became available, I chose that layout for my two remaining students. This layout allows more information to be contained on a single page, which is preferable to a multi-page transcript.

Teascript also offers a free subscription to their weekly newsletter, which contains transcript advice and tips, publishes a blog, has a Facebook page, and a presence on Twitter.

My last student graduated in May, so I no longer subscribe to Teascript, but I heartily endorse this program to every home schooler I meet that expresses a need to create a transcript for her student. If you have a high school student, you owe it to yourself to take a look at Teascript.



*Holly Williams Urbach home schooled her 5 children from 1993-2013 and now works as the director of a small home school enrichment academy in central Texas. Holly enjoys writing on a variety of topics in her spare time and welcomes visitors to her blog, Whollyholly, at <http://thewhollyholly.blogspot.com>.*

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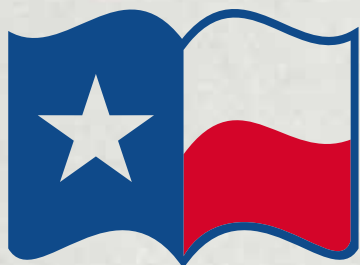
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T E X A S  
**HOME SCHOOL**

COALITION ASSOCIATION

*Keeping Texas Families Free*

## News and Notes

*During the past quarter THSC staff has continued to work tirelessly, protecting home schooling and parental rights, hosting its Convention, and advocating for members.*

*In recent years THSC has supported families in legal battles when their parental rights were being threatened or abused. Because parents' ability to make decisions for their children is the foundation for their right to choose how to educate them, these cases are of utmost importance to every Texas family.*

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### Tutt Family Case Update

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There were new developments in the Tutt case during this past quarter. On August 28, 2014, Judge Tena Callahan ruled two of the four children at home would be released from CPS oversight and be allowed to return to home schooling. Their attorney believes this ruling was intended to apply to all four children, but as of the time of this writing she has not yet received a written order to clarify.

Also at the time of this writing, the motion filed by CPS at the beginning of this case to terminate the Tutts parental rights is still pending. The Tutts' attorney filed a writ of mandamus with the Texas

Fifth Court of Appeals in Dallas, arguing that both judges in this case abused their authority. She has asked the court to rule that when the district judge ruled the taking of the children by CPS was unlawful, she should have complied with the law and returned all of the children to the family. Therefore, all of the actions and pending actions of the court since that time should be dismissed and all the children returned to the family immediately. Should the Fifth Court of Appeals deny this action, the next step will probably be to move toward a jury trial.

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### Keeping Texas Families Free

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THSC is committed to continuing to publicize the unlawful actions of judges and to hold them accountable to the fullest extent of the law. One such judge THSC took notice of and action against was Judge Denise Pratt. Her horrific actions included issuing a blanket gag order for all cases in her court dealing with parent-child relationships, failing to rule in a parent's visitation motion for 10 months, and allegedly making a final ruling in a child custody case without hearing any testimony or evidence. These actions received increased exposure during the Republican Primary, when she drew four opponents, one of whom was THSC-endorsed Alicia Franklin. Prior to the runoff, Pratt announced her resignation, and the suspension of her campaign, due,

at least in part, to our coverage and to that of many others who, for the sake of families and children, said this judge had to go.

In both the executive and legislative branches of the state government, THSC holds as its responsibility the education of elected officials on home schooling and parental rights issues. In the judicial branch, THSC continues to fight for families as they navigate the legal system and, when necessary, works through the political process to replace judges who do not recognize the fundamental, constitutional right of fit parents to direct the care, control, and upbringing of their children.

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## Conventions

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“This was my first convention and I LOVED IT!!! I felt like I learned so much and enjoyed the speakers and the attendees! I have felt God tugging on my heart to lead me towards homeschooling, and this conference really helped me to soften my heart towards the idea. My husband only came for the Saturday night Duggars, but even he was greatly impacted. Thank you for doing such an amazing job putting this event together. It was awesome!!!”

*-Convention Attendee*

### **THSC Convention - Woodlands**

THSC hosted its most successful convention to date! This year's THSC Convention & Family Conference boasted an attendance of over 6,500 making it the largest home school trade fair in the state. For the first time, the Convention was also combined with the Leadership Conference, allowing home school support group leaders to benefit from both conferences at the same time. Leaders are encouraged to make plans for 2015 as the Texas Leadership Conference will once again be offered. Mark your calendars for July 23-25, 2015.

### **THSC Convention - Arlington NEW!**

The THSC Events team is looking ahead to 2015 and excited to announce the addition of the THSC Arlington Convention May 7-9, 2015. Blessed by an endorsement from the former Home School Book Fair Directors, THSC will offer the Arlington Convention the same weekend and same venue as the Arlington Book Fair but with all the THSC Convention extra's attendees have come to expect. Keynote speakers will include: Steve Demme with Demme Learning, Crystal Paine with Money Saving Mom, David Barton with WallBuilders, John R. Erickson, author of Hank the Cowdog, and special Mother's Day weekend guests, The Duggar Family!

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## Holding Officials and Employers to Compliance

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THSC reached out to help many of its members this past quarter, writing letters and advocating for home schooling rights. In June the Association contacted the Texas attorney general's office in support of a home schooling mother whose child support was discontinued prematurely. In a similar case, the Association came to the aid of a custodial parent of a child who was home schooling past the age of 18 to have child support continued until graduation.

The Association also contacted independent businesses regarding their policies and training as they relate to home schoolers. In June the Association encouraged Mardel to better educate employees on home school requirements in Texas and offered resources regarding those requirements. The need for such a training outreach became apparent after a confused mother contacted THSC when a Lubbock Mardel employee erroneously told her she was required to forward her child's transcript to the state. As the primary source for information on home schooling in Texas, THSC makes it a priority to be sure accurate advice is given to both those considering and those actively home schooling their children. Therefore, the organization wanted to reach out to this business, which provides valuable resources for

home schoolers, to clarify any questions related to home schooling requirements.

In another case, the Association wrote letters to Farmers Insurance regarding its policy for Good Student Discounts, a program that reduces the expense of insuring young drivers based on academic merits. After a home school student was denied the discount in April, the Association responded with a letter addressing problems with the policy and asking for resolution. At the time of the letter, the discount offered by Farmers was based on a home school student scoring in the top 20% on a nationally accredited test while at the same time allowing public and private school students to submit only A/B grades on a transcript.

THSC has been very busy this past quarter. It has worked to defend Texas families' rights, fought valiantly for parental rights, worked to hold judicial leaders accountable for their actions, and provided vital news and resources to its members—all while hosting one of the most successful conventions in its history.

# teaching a child:

Home schooling is largely heart to heart. The methods and even the curriculum do not matter nearly as much as the relationship between child and parent.

~Ruth Beechick

*Heart and Mind: What the Bible Says About Learning*

by Marilyn Rockett

Recently a friend and I were reminiscing about “the good ol’ days” of home schooling. I began in 1981, and my friend a bit after that. We laughed about hiding behind the blinds and not venturing outside our homes during school hours. We lamented our lack of materials because the Christian curriculum companies wouldn’t sell to the “weirdo” families who wanted to teach their own children—the audacity of us! We discussed changes in the home school community as compared to the 1980s. More importantly, we talked about how the Lord had changed us and our families because of our commitment to home educate our children.

Would we have done some things differently? Absolutely! Do we regret having made the leap of faith and kept our children home from traditional school? Absolutely not! Change in our families and in us was inevitable because we chose the less-traveled path.

## REDEFINE EDUCATION

One of our family’s biggest changes was an education redefinition. I remembered many mental questions I asked as a child that never received an answer from my classroom teacher, who was trying to meet the needs of 25-plus children. Fortunately, my parents and grandparents encouraged me to ask questions and read, but I saw that real learning often took place outside a classroom. I wanted my children to ask questions, explore the answers, learn about things in which they were interested, learn to think for themselves, and love learning.

Of course, they had to study basics and had to complete assignments they preferred not to at times. But at home we could approach those more difficult assignments in various ways suited to their learning ability, slowing down or speeding up as needed. My thoughts echoed what Mary Jo Tate says in her new book, *Flourish at Home* (Apologia, 2014): “Make sure your children know that education is not simply checking assignments off a list. Teach them not only to answer questions but also to ask them.”

## LOVE TO LEARN

The love of learning is contagious—highly communicable. Parents infect their children and, often, others around them. A number of years ago a public schooled neighbor boy, as he disembarked from the school bus in the afternoon, asked my youngest son why he was at home mowing our yard in the afternoon. When my son answered that he home schooled, the boy responded with surprise and commented, “Do you have a disease or something?” If I had been there, I would have said, “Yes, our entire family has a disease. We love to learn. Would you like to be infected too?”

I knew I couldn’t teach my children all they needed to know; incidentally, neither can classroom teachers. But I could teach them where to find answers. I could teach them to love to learn and to thirst to know more.

## SALT THE LESSONS

Excess salt produces thirst. If your children don’t seem to love what they are learning, “salt” the lessons. Explore other methods of sharing the material, or put it aside until a while. Frequently use the words look it up or let’s look it up and don’t be too quick to answer questions. If a child answers incorrectly or doesn’t seem to understand something, he will learn when you require him to find out why his answer was incorrect. When you ask questions in return, he will examine and think. You may be surprised at his answers. Laugh while you learn together, and relax when he don’t seem to be catching on to a concept. He will, as I experienced when one son didn’t read until he was nine years old.

Salt is your most helpful tool in teaching your child. Use it liberally to help your child thirst to learn. Your entire family will love learning, and you will experience the loveliest benefit of home education: the love in your family and in your relationships that incites the desire to learn.



*Marilyn Rockett is a veteran home school mom with four grown sons, eight grandsons (including twins), one granddaughter, and three great-grandsons. She has mentored moms for more than 30 years. Her book *Homeschooling at the Speed of Life* provides organizational helps and encouragement. Visit her at [MarilynRockett.com](http://MarilynRockett.com).*



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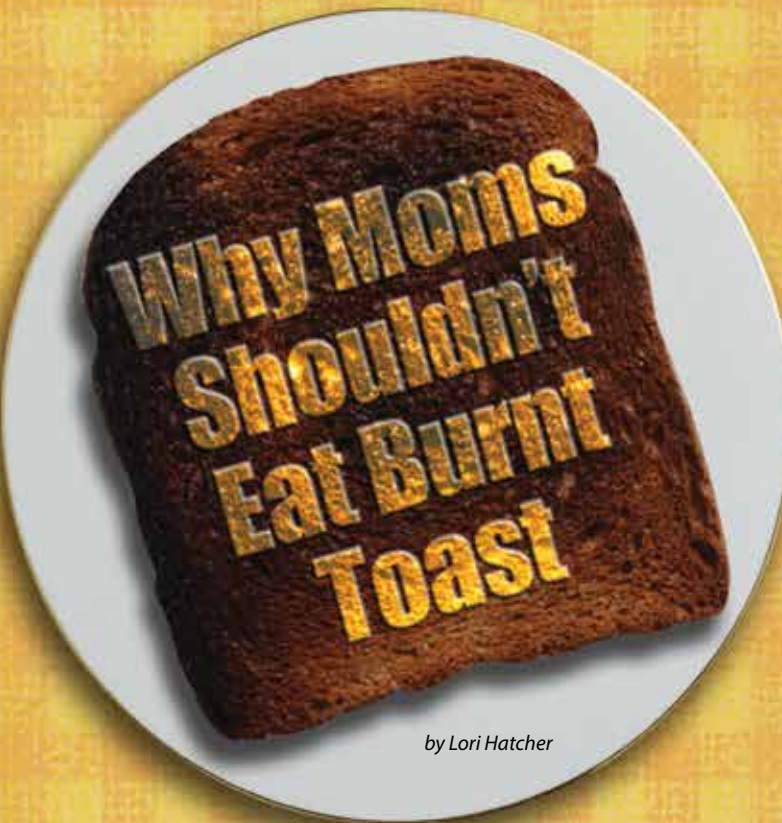
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By always taking the leftovers, never speaking up about our preferences, and always yielding our “rights” for the benefit of our children, we set the stage for our children to devalue us and the other mothers in their lives. We also risk creating selfish, self-centered children who have a sense of entitlement.

In the burnt toast scenario, what if we presented it another way? What if we said, “Uh oh, one piece of bread got a little crispy. I ate the crispy one last time; who would like to be unselfish and take it this time?” If someone rises to the occasion, praise and thank him. If you get no takers, volunteer someone and rotate the privilege as the opportunity presents itself.

This is a great time for Dad to step into the teaching lesson. Perhaps he can set the tone by saying, “You know, Mom is usually the one who eats the broken cookie, the burnt toast, or the smallest piece of chicken. But Mom’s really special, and she deserves the best. I’ll take the burned one so she can have a nice piece.”

And instead of Mom being the last one to sit down and the first one to jump up for milk, ketchup, and the serving spoon, what if Dad said, “Honey, you’ve worked hard to cook this meal for us. Why don’t you sit down and let us serve you?” From this powerful example, our children learn to view Mom as an appreciated, valued member of the family, and not a servant.

If we don’t have our husband’s support, we can still help our children learn that moms are dignified human beings worthy of respect, honor, and deference.

We can say to them, “I’ve spent the last hour helping you with your school work. Now it’s Mommy’s turn to do something for herself. Please don’t interrupt me for the next 30 minutes.” And then don’t cave.

We can say, “I’m happy to take you to soccer practice three nights a week, but unfortunately, tonight’s practice conflicts with my Bible study, so you’re going to have to miss it. It’s important for Mom to have time to be with her friends and study God’s Word.

I’m not saying you should never sacrifice for your children ever again. As parents, there will be many times when we are called to sacrifice. I am saying that we do our children a disservice when we cast ourselves as second-class citizens by always putting their wants and preferences first.

One of the greatest gifts we can give our children is a healthy view of the value and worth of women—and mothers in particular. They need to understand that moms are human beings with likes, preferences, privileges, and feelings. This is biblical and right.

What about you? Who eats the burnt toast at your house? Is it time for a change?



*Lori Hatcher is a 17-year home schooling veteran and author of the devotional book Joy in the Journey – Encouragement for Homeschooling Moms. A women’s ministry speaker, Lori shares five-minute devotions for busy women on her blog, “Hungry for God . . . Starving for Time” (lorihatcher.com).*

**W**ho eats the burnt toast at your house?

Go ahead, admit it. You do. Because you’re a mother.

Author Tenneva Jordan said, “A mother is a person who, seeing there are only four pieces of pie for five people, promptly announces she never did care for pie.” Everyone knows mothers personify selflessness and generosity, so what I’m about to propose might border on heresy. Here goes:

I think moms are too unselfish.

Instead of setting a good example for our children, I wonder if our purely motivated, selfless actions might actually be having the opposite effect.

Motherhood is, by nature, an unselfish calling. Even before our children are born, we begin to deny ourselves. We lose sleep, money, and the ability to see our feet—sometimes forever. And then they’re born. We lose more sleep, more money, and we still can’t see our feet because they never stop moving. Ever.

If there isn’t enough money for two winter coats, and you and your child need one, your child gets it—no questions asked. They go to the dentist every six months because you wouldn’t dream of neglecting your children’s teeth, but you haven’t had yours checked in years. When there are limited resources and unlimited needs, parents sacrifice for their children. It’s good, right, and responsible.

But sometimes mothers take it too far. We sacrifice when we don’t need to, as if there is a virtue in going above and beyond the duty of selflessness. In doing so, we set a poor example for our families and train them to neglect and slight mothers.

Take the burnt toast, for example. I actually overheard one of my friends’ children say to his sister as he surveyed the breakfast table, “Mom will eat the burnt one; she likes it.”

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*Applications must be postmarked by February 5, 2015.*



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# UPCOMING EVENTS

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Austin

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Texas Home School Coalition (THSC)

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**May 7-9, 2015**

Arlington

THSC Convention -

Arlington

Texas Home School Coalition (THSC)

[thsc.org/convention](http://thsc.org/convention)

**Jul 23-25, 2015**

The Woodlands

THSC Convention -

Woodlands

Texas Home School Coalition (THSC)

[thsc.org/convention](http://thsc.org/convention)

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The Texas Home School Coalition (THSC) is a 501(c)(3) educational organization that is supported by tax-deductible donations. THSC is dedicated to serving the home school community; it promotes home education in Texas by educating the public, the home school community, and officials about home schooling.

THSC Association, a 501(c)(4) advocacy organization dedicated to serving and protecting the home school community of Texas, is supported by membership fees (not tax-deductible) and sales of resources. The Association now offers legal assistance in regard to home education issues as a benefit to its members, along with several other benefits and discounts.

The work of the THSC PAC (Political Action Committee) - endorsing and supporting pro-home schooling candidates - is supported by donations that are not tax-deductible. See [thscpac.org](http://thscpac.org) for more information.

# Math-U-See has a new sister!

We're so excited here at Demme Learning—our family of products is growing. We are proud to introduce an innovative new spelling curriculum, Spelling You See, which is solidly based on the same philosophy of education as our beloved Math-U-See.



Since 2000, this unique research-based approach has been tested with hundreds of students. Colorful, brief daily lessons of short passages allow words to be learned in context—no word lists, rule memorization, or lengthy prep. Copywork, reading, listening, and speaking are integrated as students move through sequential stages of spelling and language development.

Visit [SpellingYouSee.com](https://www.spellingyousee.com) now to learn more.



For almost 25 years, Math-U-See and Demme Learning have been providing innovative educational solutions for engaged parents. We are proud to offer parents a spelling curriculum that is consistent with our core principles.

Read more at [DemmeLearning.com](https://www.demmelearning.com)



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TERMS AND CONDITIONS: Free offer is limited to standard shipping within the continental U.S. This coupon is not redeemable for cash and cannot be used on orders already placed, including backorders. Coupon cannot be combined with any other offer.

Offer expires December 24, 2014.