

TEXAS HOME SCHOOL COALITION

REVIEW

KEEPING TEXAS FAMILIES FREE

Talented to Tone Deaf,

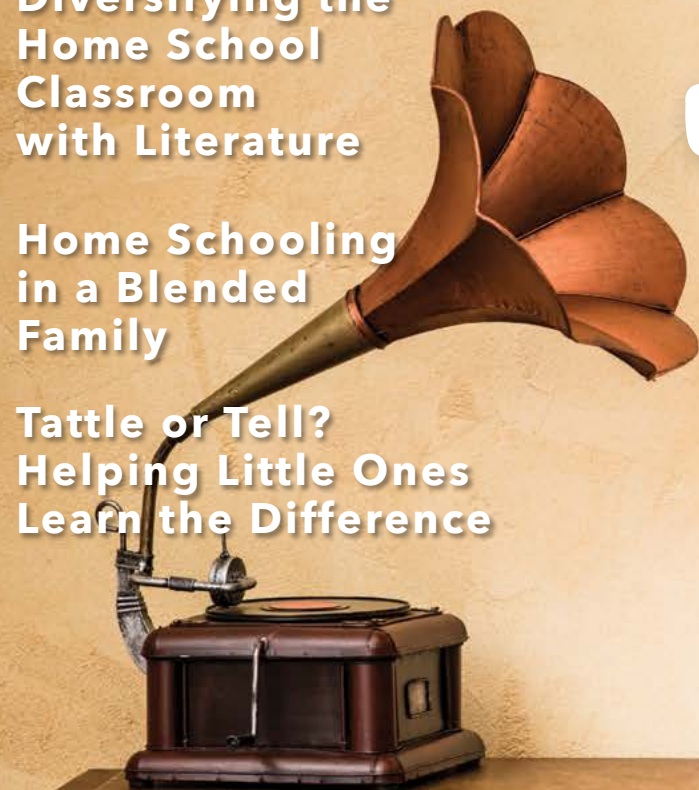
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Diversifying the
Home School
Classroom
with Literature

Home Schooling
in a Blended
Family

Tattle or Tell?
Helping Little Ones
Learn the Difference



TEXAS
HOME SCHOOL
COALITION

NOVEMBER 2016
VOLUME 20, ISSUE 4
www.THSC.org

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History has taught us that the right change comes only when men and women honor God and respect His Word.

BJU Press supports you as you teach your children to be such men and women.



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Editorial correspondence and address changes may be directed to review@thsc.org. The deadline for article submission for the May 2017 issue is February 1. Interested authors should see THSC.org/Writers.

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 Association. 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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President/Publisher | Tim Lambert

Publications Manager | Donna Schillinger

Managing Editor | Alisha Mattingly

Contributing Editors | Maxine Mitchell,
Shannon Kingsbury, Patrick Cannon

Advertising | sales@thsc.org

Graphic Design | Grayson Price
Grayson-Creative.com

Texas Home School Coalition
PO Box 6747, Lubbock, TX 79493 staff@thsc.org
(p) 806.744.4441 (f) 806.744.4446 THSC.org



November marks the beginning of a new chapter in federal and state politics. Once the general election is behind us, new public servants will take office and the inevitability of a new president in January will bring different perspective.

January 2017 means something entirely different for Texans with the convening of the 85th Texas Legislature. It will be time again to watch closely as bills are brought before the House of Representatives, Senate, and governor. While we have the hope of new legislation to protect families and provide opportunities to home schoolers, we will remain attentive for bills that would threaten parental rights and hold legislators accountable for the promises made during campaigning.

The Texas Home School Coalition launched the THSC Watchmen initiative during the 83rd Texas Legislature in 2013. These interns live in

Austin during the entire legislative session and act as watchdogs to protect and promote family and parental rights.

In this issue of *Review*, we have two prime illustrations of THSC Watchmen priorities for this legislative session. In "Open Wide Your Mouth" (p. 10), we explore one of the many ways in which a successful Tim Tebow bill would expand opportunities for home school students. "Lone Wolf No More" (p. 40), penned by a dear friend of the Tutt family, reflects on the need for Texas home schooling families to unite in preventing government overstep and to respond effectively when it happens.

What are some practical ways home schooling families can unite?

In 2017, THSC is pushing legislation to reform CPS, reign in the abusive power of Texas family court judges, and advocate for education reform and school choice through the Tim Tebow bill and other legislation. In the upcoming legislative session, we may need witnesses for legislation we propose, and there will likely be times when we need to call for a coordinated response to legislation harmful to parental rights. To stay tuned in for these sorts of opportunities, visit THSC.org/KeepInformed and THSC.org/Blog.

This January a fresh group of THSC Watchmen will be working with our public policy staff to pass legislation to *Keep Texas Families Free*. Plan your visit to see our work first-hand during one of three 2017 Capitol Days events. Learn more at THSC.org/CapitolDays.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

"While the Scriptures should dominate our children's mental development (Romans 12:1-2), logic is the handmaiden of truth; and speech and debate are useful in developing reason."

Lynne Tagawa p. 11

"Consider your favorite book. Why is it your favorite? ... Our esteem for a book is based largely on our emotional connection with the characters."

Alisha Mattingly p. 16

"Distinguishing between tattling and telling may seem easy to an adult, but for a child, recognizing his or her own motives needs to be learned just like tying shoes or brushing teeth."

Cindy Goldberg, p. 33

"No matter how educated, careful, informed and proactive we are, there is more strength in numbers."

Candi Summers p. 43

Defending Families in CPS Cases



2016 THSC CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION

Responding to the critical need for the legal defense and advocacy of families from false Child Protective Services (CPS) allegations, Texas Home School Coalition continues the effort to build a network of attorneys who are trained and willing to help.

THSC offers attorneys FREE registration in exchange for an agreement to handle one pro bono CPS case that is referred by THSC.

TOPICS MAY INCLUDE:

- Legal Status of Home Schooling in Texas
- Historical and Legal Support for Parental Rights
- Handling the CPS Investigation Through the Show Cause Hearing
- Fighting CPS Through Trial and Appeal
- Engaging Parents in Their Own CPS Cases
- Parental Guidance Advised: Custody Discussions for the Home School Case

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**T E X A S
HOME SCHOOL
COALITION**

THSC INTERVENTIONS ARE EFFECTIVE!

We wrote:

To the president and chief operating officer of Nationwide Property & Casualty Operations, Nationwide Insurance:

"It was recently brought to our attention that many home school students in Texas are not able to get approved for the Good Student Discount. The reason stated is that Nationwide's policy offers no discount to home schooled students unless they place in the top 20 percent on a nationally recognized test. However, private school students need only show the normal minimum B average grades on a report card or progress report.

"The Texas Supreme Court Decision TEA v. Leeper clarified that home schools are included in the private school exemption from the compulsory attendance statute. Furthermore, Texas Education Code Section 51.9241 outlines that the state of Texas 'considers successful completion of a nontraditional secondary education to be equivalent to graduation from a public high school.' [1.] Finally, studies have shown that home school students consistently score 15 to 30 percentage points above their public school peers on standardized academic achievement tests. [2.] Therefore home school students' report cards showing A/B grades sufficiently satisfy the requirements for a Good Student Discount."

They replied:

"Your letter prompted Nationwide to carefully review our Good Student Discount program. I agree, there is definitely an area of opportunity in which we can equally reward all students for their good grades, regardless of whether they attend public or private school, or are schooled at home.

"A plan of action is now in place to promptly revise our guidelines to allow for home schooled students to provide proof of a B average. We believe this change will be a simplified approach for our members to award high achieving home schooled students.

"Nationwide is always seeking to improve the experience of our members and your feedback has been valuable and insightful. Thank you, Mr. Lambert, for taking time to bring this matter to my attention." ■

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT THSC CONVENTION

"Thank you for the nursing moms' room, the water jugs everywhere, the opportunity to get a recording of a session. Y'all have truly made an excellent convention with lots of conveniences for the mamas of babies."

"We love to come and laugh (sometimes so as not to cry) about the common mishaps and joys in home schooling. My husband and I like to come each year to literally recharge our batteries so we're ready to put forth extra energy into our children. It's wonderful to see we're not alone in what we do, how we do it, and the arguments we face."

"We are new to home school. My husband and I both attended the convention and I have to say it was an amazing experience. We were overwhelmed, encouraged, we cried and laughed."

"It was so refreshing—thank you for a great conference! I especially love that THSC members get in free."

"The Leadership Conference was wonderful—I hope you advertise that a bit more next year. Oh, and the local vendors upstairs the first night—fantastic idea."

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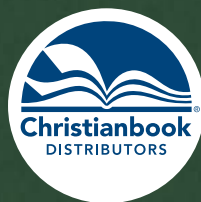
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A Living CIVICS LESSON

by Nancy Dillard

While planning 2016-2017 lessons, projects and field trips, have you considered a trip to Austin? Not just any trip, but a hands-on practical learning experience meeting leaders in the Texas state government.

Every other year, during the Texas legislative session, Texas Home School Coalition offers Capitol Days—the ultimate, up-close opportunity for home school students to see how state government works, meet lawmakers, and see history as they move through the halls of the magnificent capitol.

THSC is offering three Capitol Days experiences in 2017: February 6, March 9, and April 3. Students actually get to lobby legislators and their staff on bills relevant to home schooling and parental rights such as the Tim Tebow bill (see “Fighting for a Level Playing Field and Debate Stage” on page 14) and the Parent Child Protection Act.

In preparation for Capitol Days, THSC members have access to the Lone Star Study, a unit study that helps fulfill the good citizenship home schooling requirement. The Lone Star Study helps students understand the legislative process and learn who their representatives, senators and judges are prior to meeting them.

While in Austin for Capitol Days, plan visits to other historical landmarks such as the Governor’s Mansion, the Bullock Texas History Museum, the O. Henry Museum, Congress Avenue Bridge (home to the largest urban bat colony in North America), the Zilker Botanical Gardens (boasting 30 acres of themed gardens), and the Texas State Cemetery (resting place of many famous Texans).

Save the dates and visit THSC.org/CapitolDays for more details. Sign up to receive updates on Capitol Days and many other THSC offerings at THSC.org/KeepInformed (check “Events”). Stay tuned for more details and information to assist you in planning what is sure to be one of the highlights of your school year.

Make plans now for a field trip that will teach and inspire your students and leave them with an understanding of how important the governmental process is and how it impacts our citizens! ■

Nancy Dillard serves as a policy analyst for Texas Home School Coalition.





2017 CAPITOL DAYS

Bring your family & learn about the legislative process.

Receive training from experienced professionals.
Learn about Texas government in a fun way.
Defend your freedom to parent and home school.
Meet actual Texas representatives and staff.
Help pass a real law.

Capitol Days won't
be back until 2019.
Don't miss out.



GET THE LONE STAR STUDY

The Lone Star Study is a unit study in good citizenship and a popular addition to the Capitol Day experience. Become a THSC member and enjoy this membership benefit as a complement to your Capitol Day field trip.

**Mark YOUR
CALENDAR**

Monday, February 6
Thursday, March 9
Monday, April 3

Get more details at thsc.org/capitoldays

OPEN WIDE YOUR MOUTH

BY LYNNE TAGAWA

I WANTED TO DISAPPEAR.

Our production of “The Merchant of Venice” was an embarrassment, with missed lines everywhere, and it wasn’t all the kids’ fault. True, they hadn’t brought much enthusiasm to the venture, but I could see where I had failed as well. To start, I hadn’t scheduled enough rehearsals.

Well, live and learn—our next play, “Anne of Green Gables,” was a hit. However, that rough start got me thinking: Why do we teach these things? Why bother with speech, drama or debate? As a former home schooler (children now grown and gone), I know well the pick and choose of lessons. Shall I teach computer programming? Art? Music? Sports? Certainly drama seems like one of those “optional” categories. In one sense it is, yet in another sense it’s most definitely not! I’ll explain.

school curricula—those based on the classical trivium—combine these subjects with other elements of English, such as composition and literature, with the goal of developing rational oral and written communication. Through studying speech or formal debate, we learn the art of persuasion. Even in a dramatic presentation designed for entertainment, our students learn to persevere despite fear of speaking in front of others.

**IT IS POSSIBLE
TO DEVELOP
THE SKILL OF
SPEAKING TO
STRANGERS.**

Recently I opened my door to find a salesman trembling on my porch. Listening to his spiel, I felt sorry for

Teaching drama and speech go hand in hand. In the olden days, speech class was known as oratory or rhetoric. A typical, modern speech textbook includes public speaking, debate and drama. Some high



him. True, perhaps not everyone is cut out for sales—or door-to-door evangelism, for that matter—but it is possible to develop the skill of speaking to strangers. Overwhelming fear can be reduced with practice. Speaking to strangers one-on-one, in small groups, or before larger audiences is a skill that is necessary in many professions.

Courtesy in speech can be cultivated as well. Answering a telephone properly is probably the most basic form of public speaking and can be learned at an early age. Training a child to say “Yes, sir,” or “No, ma’am,” likewise falls into this category. While the Scriptures should dominate our children’s mental development (Romans 12:1-2), logic is the handmaiden of truth, and speech and debate are useful in developing reason.

Recently a former student explained to me how her experience in debate had affected her: “I remember most how debate helped me think about what I was reading, form an opinion, and then express it with confidence—all of which, at the time, I was extremely shy about. For a Christian home schooler, or for any high schooler really, I think it is important to take ownership of our beliefs and convictions. We cannot shyly ride on the coattails of our parents forever. As Christians,

we must learn to study the Bible and understand what God’s Word says. We

to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.”—M.P.

“ I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT TO TAKE OWNERSHIP OF OUR BELIEFS AND CONVICTIONS. ”

This student learned to research and critically consider what she was reading and then figure out how to express her thoughts about it

cannot be lazy or apathetic about our faith. 2 Timothy 2:15 (NASB): ‘Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need

coherently. In written form, we call this defending a thesis. The same process is used in a persuasive speech or formal debate.

FOUR STAGES

Most traditional curriculum packages integrate the elements of speech into their scope and sequence, adding “speech” as a defined subject for high school. The list of resources below can be used to supplement a typical curriculum and is by no means exhaustive.

1 Early Elementary (K-3)

- Recitation of memory work (poems, scripture passages, other passages such as the preamble to the Constitution)
- Short skits, charades and drama games (visit DramaNotebook.com for resources)

2 Middle Grades (4-6)

- Recitation of longer poems and passages
- Oral reading
- Longer skits or short plays
- Drama games (“101 Drama Games for Children” by David Farmer)
- Critical thinking activities (see “Building Thinking Skills Book 2” at CriticalThinking.com)

3 Junior High (7-9)

- Continued study of logic and critical thinking skills (“The Fallacy Detective” by Bluedorn and Bluedorn)
- Analysis of famous speeches (see ReadWriteThink.org and search “analyzing famous speeches”)
- Speech (IEW.com, search “speech boot camp”)
- Short dramatic productions

4 High School (10-12)

- Advanced critical thinking skills (Classical Academic Press’ “The Art of Argument,” “The Argument Builder” and “Discovery of Deduction”)
- Biblical worldview studies (“Think Biblically,” John MacArthur, ed., or the ASK curriculum developed by Ravi Zecharias)
- General speech curricula or helps (ArtOfEloquence.com, or [Lightning Lit and Comp](http://LightningLitandComp.com)’s “Speech” by Elizabeth Kamath)
- Full dramatic productions. If there is no local thespian troupe in your area, be inspired by this group: ChristianMusicalTheatre.com
- Renaissance festivals and historical reenactments—held yearly (see Cotilha.com for a link to reenactments and TheBards.net/txrenfaires.shtml to find Texas faires)

By Lynne Tagawa



"Answering a telephone properly is probably the most basic form of public speaking and can be learned at an early age."

Have you noticed participants in political debates often avoid a question by casting aspersions on their opponents? A speech class is the perfect setting in which to learn to identify such tactics. As the student learns and practices this comprehensive skill of absorption, evaluation and composition, he or she will be faced with decisions. What is true? What do I really believe? For a user-friendly introduction to this sort of logical process, check out "The Fallacy Detective" by Hans and Nathaniel Bluedorn.



**OKAY,
YOU'RE CONVINCED,
BUT WHERE TO START?**

The basics of speech instruction do not require a class of many students. With one large family or a couple of smaller families working together, it may be possible to cover everything in the typical speech textbook, with the possible exception of a dramatic production—and even there, performing scenes from various plays is quite easy to do. Shakespeare, after all, is meant to be read aloud. (Some lines from Shakespeare would be rated PG-13 today and may need to be edited.)

Only four families banded together for our production of "Anne of



I AM APOLOGIA SCIENCE

"The biblical worldview of the Exploring Creation series and its authors is refreshing. These are real scientists who present God's creation in all of its awe and splendor. References to God's handiwork are intertwined throughout the texts at appropriate times. As we learned science, we were reminded where the earth and all of its creations come from."

Sue Mercer, Homeschooling Mom

"Apologia Science was a great launching point that helped me succeed throughout college. I would absolutely recommend Apologia to parents and students looking for an effective and interesting science curriculum. In fact, I already do whenever I meet homeschooling families!"

Allyson (Mercer) Martin, Associate Food Scientist Professional Certificate of the Culinary Arts, Culinary Institute of America-Greystone, Bachelor of Science in Food Science, Purdue University



apologia.com



Green Gables.” A few characters were cut to fit our needs, but we all had a great time. Beyond making memories, I believe it had a positive impact on the shyer students who needed encouragement to emerge from their comfort zones.

If you decide to put on a play, informally or publicly, look for older plays that are in the public domain. Students can help to adapt a play from an older book. Additionally, Bob Jones University Press offers a selection of scripts. Modern play scripts often have restrictions placed on their use, such as fees for performance.

If your student has a particular interest in drama, look for a Christian thespian troupe. In San Antonio, we have the Crystal Sea Drama Company produces plays on a regular basis (CrystalSeaDrama.org). There may be a troupe in your area as well.

"Beyond making memories, I believe it had a positive impact on the shyer students who needed encouragement"

There are also Christian speech and debate clubs in Texas, such as DFW Speech & Debate (DFWSpeechDebate.com). This club is affiliated with the National Christian Forensics and Communications Association (NCFCA.org), which has many affiliated organizations in Texas.

Finally, parents of younger children may have only to look at their local public school for opportunities in the near future. Texas Home School Coalition supports the proposed legislation known as the Tim Tebow bill, which would allow home school students to participate in University Interscholastic League activities alongside their peers in public school. These activities include speech, debate, and drama, as well as sports.


Like readin', writin' and 'rithmetic, learning to speak respectfully, logically, fluidly and confidently should be an essential component of home education. ■




Lynne Tagawa is a wife and mother of four sons. The author of Sam Houston's Republic, she is a secondary science teacher with experience in private schools and in home schooling her own sons. Presently she tutors and teaches home school co-op classes.




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FIGHTING

FOR A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD AND DEBATE STAGE

by Joshua Newman, Policy Analyst

Texas home schoolers have overcome many obstacles to our freedom, gaining ground toward equal treatment by the law and the state. Presently, Texas leads the nation in the amount of freedom that it offers to home schoolers. However, there are some ways in which Texas still discriminates against home schoolers—even more so than some states with less welcoming dispositions toward home schoolers.

What is the Tim Tebow bill?

If you have followed the work of the THSC Watchmen for the past two legislative sessions, then you have probably heard of the bill named after famed quarterback Tim Tebow. After being allowed to compete in Florida's public league as a home school student and then going on to play professionally, Tim Tebow earned celebrity status.

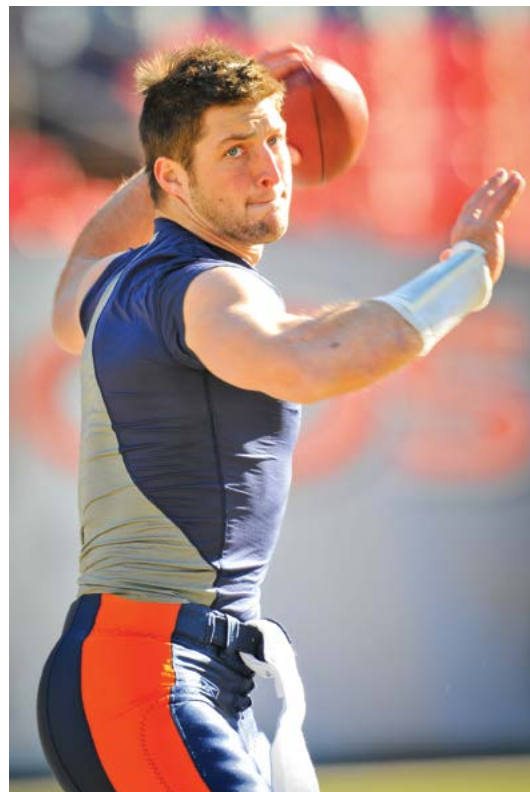
Briefly, the Tim Tebow bill makes it illegal for public schools in Texas to disqualify a student from participating in UIL extracurricular activities on the basis that the student home schools. This would apply not only to sports, but also to all other UIL events such as band, speech and debate, and theater.

Why is it important?

Parents, not the government, should make decisions for their children. In large metropolitan areas, there often are successful home school leagues that offer adequate opportunities for the home school community. Conversely, many Texas home schoolers live in rural areas where home school leagues are not available and where, often, there are simply not enough people to support such a group. Even in areas with home school leagues, some families simply cannot afford to participate. Because Texas currently does not allow students to participate in UIL activities unless they are enrolled full-time at a public school, families in either of these situations are forced into making a choice between providing the education they deem best for their child and the career and scholarship opportunities available through UIL. This is a choice no family should have to make.

Home schooling families must support the public school system via taxes. And if we pay

for the UIL programs, shouldn't we be allowed to participate if we so choose? Visit THSC.org/Tebow for more information and updates on the Tim Tebow bill as THSC's policy team advocates for this legislation once again in the 2017 legislative session! ■



Clemmed, Tim Tebow Denver Sports Authority Field 2012-01-01, CC BY-SA 3.0



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Diversifying the Classroom through Literature

by Alisha Mattingly

Did you know that five Texas cities are among the most diverse cities in the country? Fort Worth, Dallas, Houston, Austin and Arlington place in the top 50 diverse cities out of a 313-city study that looked at economic, social class, ethno-racial, and household diversity. Additionally, Houston, Dallas and Arlington are numbers 32, 50 and 53 in that same study of most ethno-racial diverse cities. With such rich diversity in the state of Texas, it would be easy to assume that children are consistently exposed to this diversity and are, therefore, less likely to show prejudices.

Public school children are exposed to a wider range of individuals than children in most home school classrooms. But with some effort, we can bring diversity to the home school. Cultural appreciation and the understanding of differences can be a difficult subject to breach and teach—especially when current events prompt the lessons. One of the easiest ways to answer the tough questions while broadening students' understanding of other cultures is through literature. In addition to the classics in middle and

high school, English and language arts should include a slew of writings by diverse authors. Literature has always been an influential channel through which we understand our world and each other. Why not add great writers to your teaching support team?

Studies have shown that the books we read are linked to developing empathy for and personal connections with

“Literature has always been an influential channel through which we understand our world and each other.”

fictional characters. Consider your favorite book. Why is it your favorite? Who is your favorite character and why? Our esteem for a book is based largely on our emotional connection with the characters.

In “The Psychology of Fandom: Why We Get Attached to Fictional Characters,” journalist Abby Norman writes, “One thing that helps us empa-

thize with family and friends, no matter what our baseline capabilities to do so are, is trying to fill in the details of what we don't know about their situation.” Through reading we learn intimate details about characters, including their background, life struggles, hopes and dreams, and failures and successes, that we may never learn about a person in real life. It is this intimate knowledge that broadens our perspective and allows us to reconsider our notions of others' lives. Literature helps us become intimately acquainted and thus deeply empathetic of diverse characters. In real life, this may translate to a willingness to better understand diverse peoples.

As with any literature, discussing the reading cements learning. Asking a child why he or she felt connected to the writing, even at an early age, leads to better critical thinking and comprehension.





The following are examples of books that can be used to expose learners through literature to the diverse cultures that make up the United States.

Early Readers

African American Literature

Chocolate Me by Taye Diggs – A young boy learns to accept and love his differences despite the teasing of other children.

Asian American Literature

Bee-Bim Bop by Linda Sue Park – A child helps her mother shop for and prepare ingredients for a traditional Korean dish.

Hispanic American Literature

Abuelo by Arthur Dorros – A young girl imagines she and her grandmother can fly.

Native American Literature

Dreamcatcher by Audrey Osofsky – A simple story told through poetry and beautiful illustrations of the Ojibway Indians who wove dreamcatchers that capture nightmares so only good dreams get to the sleeper.

First – Second Grade

African American Literature

One Word from Sophia by Jim Averbeck – The story of a young negotiator who really, really wants her one birthday wish to come true.

Asian American Literature

Hot, Hot Roti for Dada-ji by F. Zia – A little boy's grandfather is visiting from India and the boy wants to entice his grandfather, whose stories of strength have entertained him, to show off how strong he is by tasting the boy's hot, hot roti dish made with mango pickle.

Hispanic American Literature

What Can You Do with a Paleta by Carmen Tafolla – A charming story about the wonders of the paleta, a Mexican popsicle.

Native American Literature

Crazy Horse's Vision by Joseph Bruchac – This Parents' Choice Gold Award winning book tells the story of a young Native American man who seeks a vision that will help him save his people.

continued next page...

ONLY IN TEXAS

Connecting Hispanic Culture and Texas History

By Patrick Cannon, Contributing Editor

The history of Texas is a full spectrum of vivid tales told from many different perspectives. This diversity gives parents the opportunity to expose students to a variety of cultures. Hispanic culture is intertwined with Texas history and there are many books available that spotlight this relationship, even in the genre of young adult literature. Here are two examples of such works:

Messenger on the Battlefield

by Melinda Rice

This book is written for upper elementary and middle school students and is part of the Lone Star Heroines series by the same author. The story takes place in Gonzalez, Texas, at the beginning of the Texas Revolution. Isabel Montoya is the young subject of the story and faces division within her family once the war starts. Her two older brothers are fighting for opposing sides. When her father is injured, Isabel must figure out how to unite her family. Highlighting the strong family bond in Latin American culture, *Messenger* focuses on overcoming deep division within the family when it seems impossible.

José's Buffalo Hunt: A Story from History

by Marc Simmons

History is full of tales passed down from generation to generation through oral tradition and many of these time-tried tales serve to help us better understand life and ourselves. In one such traditional tale, it is time for 11-year-old José Arellanes to experience a rite of passage. He lives on the Texas-New Mexico border, and every year the men in his family cross into Texas to hunt Buffalo on the Llano Estacado. Now it is José's turn to join the hunting party.

Based on a true story, *José's Buffalo Hunt* explores the themes of life on the frontier as well as a boy's journey to manhood in Hispanic culture. This book is written to be independently read by an upper elementary student, but its beautiful illustrations make it a wonderful addition to any home school library.

Third – Fifth Grade

African American Literature

Maritcha: A Nineteenth-Century American Girl by Tonya Bolden – Based on the memoirs of Maritcha Rimond Lyons, the story follows a young African American girl who was born free during the time of slavery and her fight to attend an all-white school.

Asian American Literature

Blackbird Fly by Erin Entrada Kelly – Twelve-year-old Apple and her mother emigrate from the Philippines to Louisiana, and Apple struggles with being different from her classmates and staying connected with her heritage.

Native American Literature

Death of the Iron Horse by Paul Goble – A tale of the only derailling of a train by Native American people. The Cheyenne saw the train as a threat to their way of life that they bravely sought to protect.

Hispanic American Literature

Esperanza Rising by Pam Munoz Ryan – The story of an affluent Mexican girl who immigrates to America and must work as a migrant worker.

Sixth – Eighth Grade


African American Literature

Crossover by Kwame Alexander – This 2015 Newbery Medal Winner is the story of 12-year-old African American twins who learn a lot about growing up both on and off the court. The story is told in sensational verse that captures the young reader's attention.

Asian American Literature


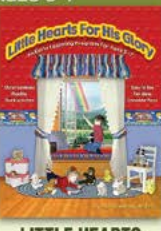

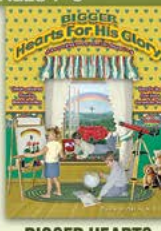
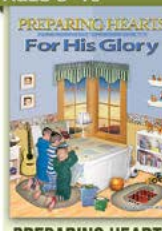



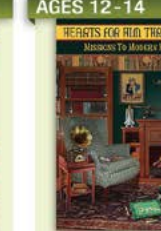




Ninjas, Piranhas, and Galileo by Greg Leitich Smith – This comedic look at middle school life involves three diverse friends who get caught up in the drama of seventh grade.

continued next page...



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Sixth – Eighth Grade (continued)

Native American Literature

Sees Behind Trees by Michael Dorris – This book doubles as Native American literature and a lesson in acceptance of others' differences, as a young near-sighted boy struggles to achieve in archery the same as the other children. He earns a new name when he is able to use his other senses in a way no one else can.

Hispanic American Literature

Return to Sender by Julia Alvarez – Two lives intersect as Mari's illegal migrant worker family finds work among desperate dairy farmers in Vermont.

High School

African American Literature

The First Part Last by Angela Johnson – A teen boy's care-free life comes to a screeching halt when he learns he is going to be a father and must care for his baby.

Asian American Literature

Girl in Translation by Jean Kwok – A teenage Chinese immigrant leads a double life as a brilliant student and a sweatshop worker, straddling the line between extreme poverty, the weight of her family, and what to do with her ambition and talent.

Hispanic American Literature

Drown by Junot Diaz – This collection of 10 tales follows people from the Dominican Republic to the urban areas of New Jersey and chronicles the attempts of the Dominican immigrants in recreating and redefining their place in society.

Native American Literature

Waterlily by Ella Cara Deloria – A young adult novel about the intricacies of kinship and unity among the Native American people. After tragedy befalls a main character, a different kind of family is established through adoption into a new tribe. ■



Alisha Mattingly has a bachelor's degree in English with a focus on cultural diversity. She is a freelance writer and currently serves as interim managing editor for THSC. Alisha and her husband, Ian, home school their two daughters, ages 7 and 14. In her free time, Alisha enjoys working as props mistress for a local theater director, participating in Renaissance festivals and traveling.

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Successful FIELD TRIPS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

by Peggy Ployhar

The home school schedule offers incredible flexibility for field trips. Unfortunately, there are many other considerations when planning field trips for special needs students. In fact, field trips are often the most stressful experiences for special needs home schooling parents.

For many special needs children, new places are often filled with excessive sensory input, new social situations, unfriendly venues for dietary needs, as well as toileting hurdles that can leave even the most prepared parent completely exhausted. But with careful planning and preparation, great adventures can be added to the home school calendar for a special needs child, even if it is only one well-planned outing each year.

Here are 11 tips to make a field trip for your special needs student a successful adventure:

- Plan your trip carefully to ensure your destination is not too adventurous an excursion for your child, especially if your child doesn't venture out to new places often.
- Don't be overly ambitious with your outing details. Plan breaks and leave lots of time for unplanned interruptions.
- Plan well ahead so you have time to thoroughly research and prepare your child for the trip.
- Determine the accessibility of the facilities at your excursion site to make sure all mobility and toileting needs can be met.
- Gather all the information you possibly can about where you are going, including brochures, maps, at-home activities that relate to your field trip experience, YouTube videos, and website information about the destination.
- Prepare your student for the trip by sharing your gathered information in bite-sized pieces, and watch the excitement and interest grow in your student as the field trip date approaches.
- Create social stories about things that are more than likely going to happen on your trip and walk your student through those transitions and interactions in advance.
- Make a visual schedule of the field trip for your child. Then, at least a week ahead of time, go through it step by step, along with the social stories you have developed, to further increase

your child's comfort and excitement about the trip.

- Plan out your meals and snacks with predetermined restaurants that meet your child's dietary and mobility needs. Also plan what food to bring with you and know where outside food is allowed.
- Bring a security item for your child for the duration of the field trip. That reminder of home will help your student to not feel completely lost in the new surroundings.
- Plan to bring help if you think you might possibly need it. ■

Peggy Ployhar serves as special needs consultant for Texas Home School Coalition.



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Music
APPRECIATION

By Lea Ann Garfias

Music appreciation and music history are important components to an arts education. Regardless of musical talent or background, any parent can incorporate music appreciation into home education!

For centuries in Western cultures, a basic understanding of music has been integral to a healthy liberal arts education. Music offers so many benefits for students! Since creation it has been a natural expression of our language and emotion. The Scriptures are full of examples of God's people singing in praise and prayer, and the entire book of Psalms records many of these for us.

Each period in history is marked by music that expressed the understanding and emotions of the times. A student who studies the arts concurrently with history and literature can appreciate the themes and expressions common to each period.

With music comprehension comes better discernment in expressing oneself and development of the student's taste in music.

Unfortunately, many parents feel ill-equipped to

teach music education to their own children. A sound music program need not be expensive, grueling or professional. Music is such a natural part of our innate, God-given communication ability that most infants naturally burst into sing-song, babbling in their cribs or during play. Young children delight in singing and listening to songs, including classical music! Families who enjoy music together as a part of their daily lives will find music education happens naturally within the home.



"Music offers so many benefits for students!"

Adding music appreciation to daily instruction is as easy as listening together. During the day, play classical music recordings, classical radio stations or classical online playlists.

You can listen to it in the morning while doing chores, in the van while running errands, during evening cleanup and cooking, and while getting ready for bed.

As teens begin to develop their own affinity for pop music, teach them that healthy music (like healthy food) is a regular staple of our auditory

diet. Setting appropriate limits like “Mom controls the music from 8-5” or “pop music on Saturday only” can help build healthy habits. With regular daily exposure to high-quality, sacred

and classical music, students learn to appreciate the good stuff!

Next, add thoughtful discussion of what students are hearing.

With the little ones, it may be asking, “What instruments do you hear?” or “Can you pretend to play the flute while you listen?” As students become older, appropriate questions could be: “Do you know which country Mozart is from?” or “Do you know what world events occurred while he was writing and performing?” After a while, students begin to grasp the timeline of musical periods (Baroque, Classical, Romantic, and 20th century) and how these composers reveal the themes of each historical time.

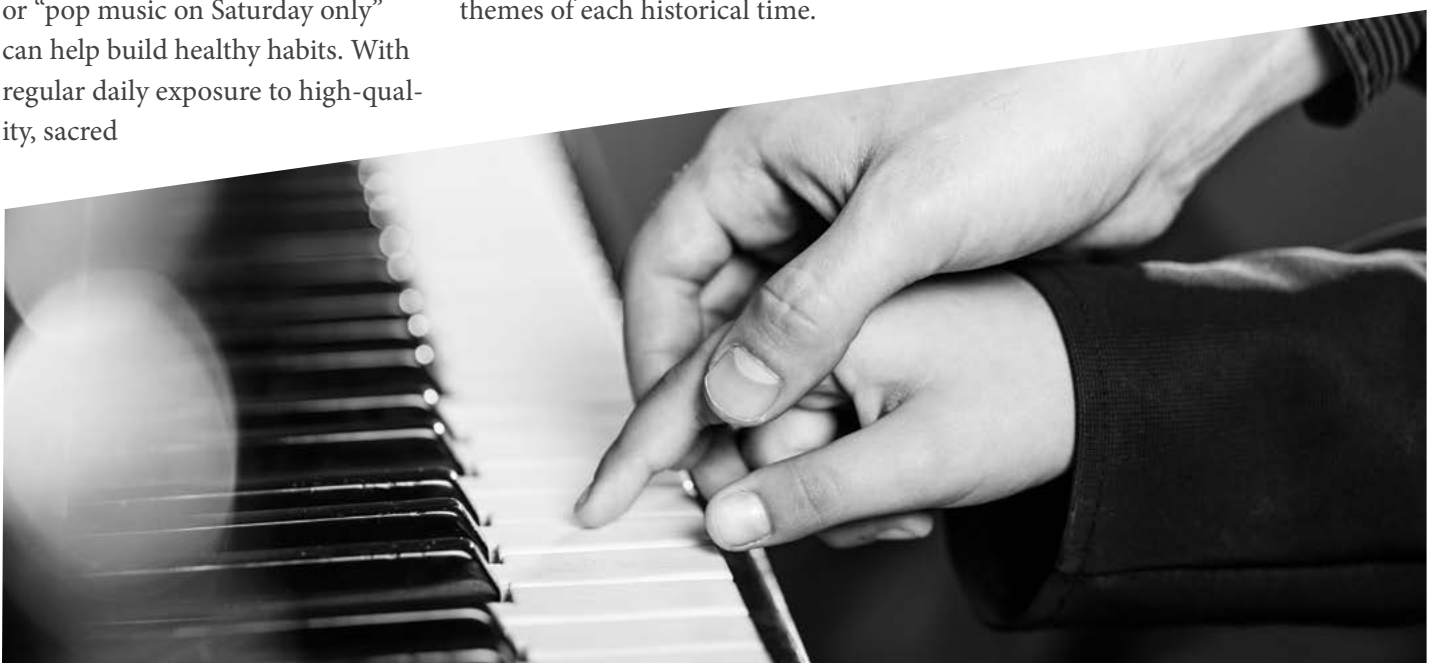


**"HEALTHY MUSIC
(like healthy food)
IS A REGULAR
STAPLE OF OUR
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The New Life Symphony Orchestra of Richardson, Texas, takes music appreciation to a whole new level. Since 2002, founder and conductor Johnny Fuller has gathered 100 musicians from around the Dallas area to “share the gospel in the music halls of the world.” Their mission starts at home with free, family-friendly concerts in Dallas/Fort Worth and Tulsa, Oklahoma, featuring hymn arrangements and great works of classical music. Besides their regular concert performances, the musicians also take their ministry to the community in events like Christmas music performances in Dallas area hospitals and patriotic community events in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

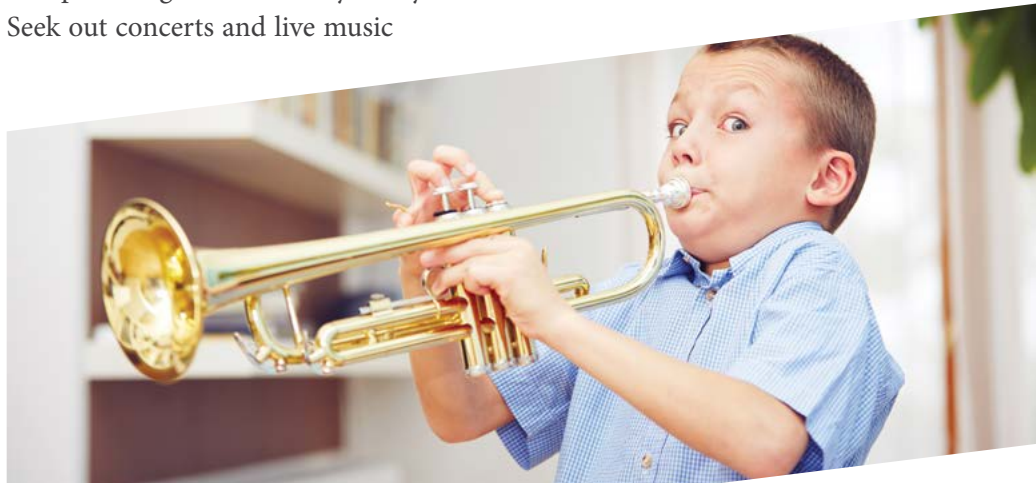
Donations raised from these events fund the orchestra’s mission trips, where they have shared praise, scripture readings and testimonies in major concert venues such as the Sydney Opera House in Australia and the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall in Scotland. Their performance in Tchaikovsky Hall in Moscow, Russia, marked the first time the Bible was read in that venue. NewLifeSymphony.com



Another great strategy for teaching music appreciation is to vary the music choices. Some parents think of classical music as only Mozart or Beethoven and imagine dainty stringed instruments—but there is so much more! The bombastic canons of Tchaikovsky, the fun folk music of Copeland, and the gritty dances of Bartok are classical gems that inspire the imagination. Some students enjoy the soothing Impressionists, while more studious academics may prefer the orderly patterns of Bach. Allowing students to experiment with a variety of works gives them an opportunity to use critical thinking to define their preferences.

One of the most exciting ways to instill a love of music in your student is to attend live music events. Music is fun to listen to, but it becomes a different experience when a group of instrumentalists and vocalists perform intricate pieces right in front of your eyes. Seek out concerts and live music

events in your area, especially free concerts. These wonderful opportunities typically take place in your local park and offer crowd-pleasing selections in a casual, child-friendly environment. Meeting professional musicians adds much to a student's



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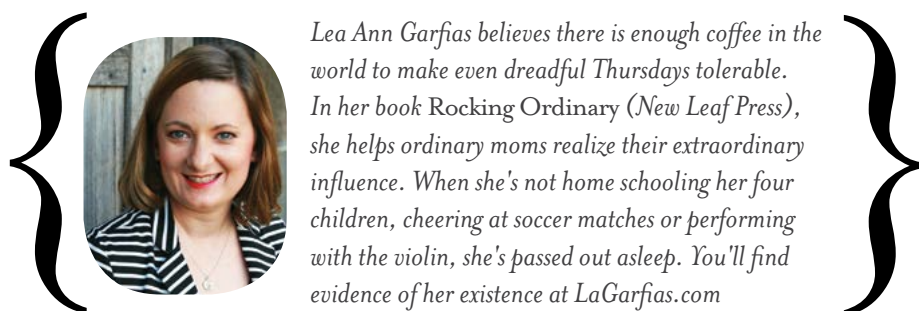
understanding of the art. After local concerts, approach a musician for a quick conversation. Encourage students to ask the musician why he or she chose that profession, how long training lasted and strategies for keeping skills sharp. Inquire about

taste in music, favorite composer and future musical goals. These discussions help students see the human aspect behind the craft.

Finally, group or private music instruction such as piano lessons, instrumental instruction and choir training are excellent ways to develop an appreciation not only for music, but also for the discipline, skill and training it takes to make beautiful music.

Performing in groups and memorizing pieces are wonderful brain exercises that boost creativity, problem-solving and memory skills!

Yes, home school parents can definitely provide an excellent music education at home. With listening skills and willing hearts, your entire family can enjoy God's gift of music together for many years to come. ■



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Experience Music Beyond European Classics

by Alisha Mattingly, Editor

You can make music appreciation a richer, more powerful lesson by including music from different world regions. Beyond the classics of Western Civilization, there is an array of strange and exotic instruments, arrangements and melodies that widen our perspective about what constitutes music. Here are three options for diversifying a music appreciation curriculum:

African Tribal Music

There is no doubt that African music has had a sweeping influence on modern music, so understanding these musical roots can be as applicable to modern music appreciation as studying Mozart and Beethoven. African music is as different as the regions it comes from. The north is heavily influenced by Arabic traditions differs greatly from the complex rhythms of Sub-

Saharan Africa. Even more fascinating are the variations of African tribal music that utilizes instruments such as the mbira, voice, and many different types of drums. Search "African Music and Musical Instruments" on Google and check out Wake Forest University's teacher's guide on the subject, wfu.edu and search "African Music Teachers Guide."

The Vast Asian Continent

There really is no one category of Asian music when you consider the differences between Chinese yayue and Indian Carnatic and Hindustani music and more. Students can learn about new instruments like the pitung ilong (nose flute) and 14 types of traditional Malay drums. A great starting point for free Asian classical music is AsianClassicalmp3.org.

South American Music

Music and dance are an integral part of the history of South and Central America. Pan flutes, strings and unusual percussions, weave an exceptional culture of music that will excite children. Search "huayno," a type of music from the Andean region of South America, or "charango," a popular musical instrument of which there are 15-plus variants, to start your child's South American music adventure. Delve into the incredible variety of Latin American contemporary music with explanations and samples of more than 50 styles at ThomasN.Sverige.net/LAMusicStyles.html. ■



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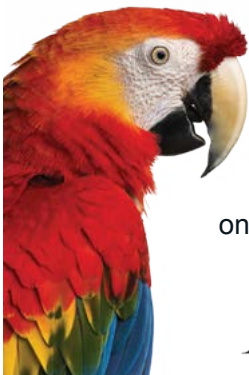
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Every family has its list of well-worn phrases that mark escalating levels of frustration for the parents. We have all looked at our children's faces and wondered what was going on in their minds. It becomes every parent's final lament:

"WHATEVER WERE YOU THINKING?"

The truth is that what goes on in a child's mind has more to do with age and maturation than anything else—and that is not a mystery.

In the 1920's a young Swiss biologist named Jean Piaget started working on intelligence tests with Alfred Binet and Theodore Simon, but soon became intrigued with brain development. With the eye of a scientist, he noticed something that the early psychometricians did not.

The makers of the test were eagerly attentive to the number of right answers their test-takers produced. Piaget, on the other hand, began noticing something interesting about the wrong answers. It seems that virtu-

ally all of the test subjects within the same age group were putting down the same wrong answers. Children of one age would tend to get an answer right, while children a little younger would not just get the answer wrong, they would all get it wrong in the same way.

Piaget was working with Simon to standardize tests for children ages five to eight. That age is important, because at age eight, measurable IQ tends to stabilize. While some might have

looked at the wrong answers and no further, Piaget saw a reasoning process. He spent the rest of his occupational life, and considerable mental resources, trying to scientifically explain the thinking of children.

"He spent the rest of his occupational life... trying to scientifically explain the thinking of children."



We cannot expect children to process information the same way as adults. They simply do not see the world like we do. Our children learn the world in four stages illustrated in four familiar phrases.

"Peek-a-boo!"

"Are we there yet?"

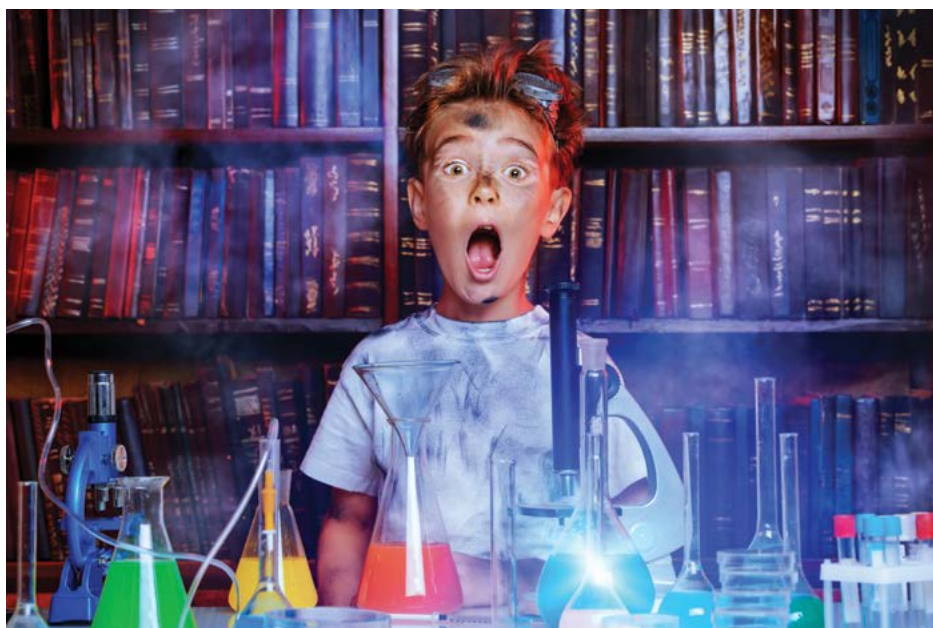
"Why?"

"It isn't fair!"

As you might expect, children don't leap from one stage to the next. There are many subdivisions in each step that allow a child to move smoothly and sequentially from one level of cognitive development to the next.

In the first stage of development, from birth to about

"In many respects, all young children think like geniuses. Which makes sense; they actually have more brain cells than you!"



The predictable progress and regularity of these phrases can show us how our child's brain is developing. It also lets you know what they can and cannot do at each age and stage.

Here is another look at these four familiar phrases with Piaget's names and descriptions of each developmental level:

two years, children live in a world of sensorimotor experience. Theirs is the world of touch, taste, sight, sound and smell. For example, it makes no difference what culture, country or language is in the home, children prior to nine months of age love to play "peek-a-boo," and the parents of these children have all developed their version of the

game. This is because children of this age only attribute existence to what their own senses tell them. Disappear from sight and you really disappear!

From about two to seven years of age, children work in an area Piaget called "preoperational." Their language skills grow at remarkable rates. They move from simple sentences of subject and verb to sentences

that contain articles, prepositions and subject-verb agreement. Think of the difference between a two-year-old saying, "Doggie bark," and a five-year-old saying, "Our doggie is barking at the mailman." The first sentence is purely sensorimotor in its construction. A dog can be seen and its bark heard. The second sentence, however, contains an adjective, an article, a preposition, and a present tense verb.

During these preschool and early elementary days, the children know that there is a reality beyond their immediate senses. They can practice symbolic ideas like playing pretend and using language. In fact, their brains are alive with energy directed toward learning the language of their culture. Their ideas about the world are limited to interpretations of their physical world, but they are still highly sophisticated. In many respects, all young children think like geniuses. Which makes sense; they actually have more brain cells than you!

They are, however, limited to experiences with a concrete world. For example, while they can tell the difference between past and future, they cannot compare time intervals. This is why a five-year-old will make you crazy asking, "Are we there yet?" You can say that it will be two hours or a long

"Peek-a-boo!"

SENSORIMOTOR STAGE (0-2 years)

Children only know what their senses tell them.

"Are we there yet?"

PREOPERATIONAL STAGE (2-7 years)

Children can think symbolically, but only about the world they know through their senses; they understand past and future, but they can't compare or comprehend time.

"Why, why, why?"

CONCRETE STAGE (7-11 yrs.)

They begin to recognize cause and effect, history and a world apart from their lives.

"It's not fair!"

ABSTRACT STAGE (11 + years)

They can understand abstract concepts like justice, algebra, logic and prediction.

"SO WHY DOES THE 9-YEAR-OLD 'GET IT?'"

time or after lunch, but measures of time mean nothing. Five minutes and five hours seem the same at this age.

A child in this stage also does not understand cause and effect. A nine-year-old recognizes that practice will make him or her a better piano player, but a six-year-old does not. You are better off simply telling the child that it is Monday, and on Monday he or she always practices the piano.

So why does the nine-year-old "get it?" From seven to 11 years of age the child is operating in the concrete operational stage of development. They eagerly gain understanding of the world around them in mental, instead of physical ways. They begin to understand cause and effect, which is the reason for the unending series of why questions. Their preferred method of learning is through the physical or "concrete" world, but they can project that learning to other times and places.





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While they depend a great deal on sensorimotor input, they are also learning to create those same impulses in their minds. Abstraction is both their friend and their servant.


That is one reason a kindergartener will look at a plate of lasagna and ask, "Do I like this?" He might even be suspicious when you say that he loved it the last time it was served. The child can't remember the incident or the flavor. Contrast that with a child of 11 who is reading the book, *The Hobbit*. She finds a passage about Bilbo Baggins roasting a rabbit over an open fire and asks, "What does rabbit taste like?" You can say that it tastes like chicken, and immediately the child has a clear mental idea of the flavor. What the rabbit tastes like is understood because the child can create an abstract image of the sensorimotor stimulus created by eating chicken. A five-year-old child does not have this skill yet, but by 11, it is possible.

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(article continues on page 34)

TATTLE & TELL

The Never-ending Dilemma of the Elementary-aged Child

BY CINDY GOLDBERG

One of the most confusing lessons we teach children is the difference between tattling and telling. We live in a time when it is critical for children to stand up for safety—their own, and that of others. They need to have the courage to tell an adult when someone is bullied, hurt or in danger. On the other hand, asking children to be diligent informers can open the door to excessive reporting about minor annoyances—tattling. Distinguishing between the two is an effective lesson in communication that parents must teach intentionally, starting at an early age.

Begin by differentiating the purposes of telling and tattling. The primary purpose for tattling is usually to get another person in trouble, get help in a conflict, or seek attention, such as in these classic tattles:

“She took my toy.” “He was mean to me.”
“She broke the rule.” “He made a face at me.” “She didn’t do her homework.”
“He said a bad word.”

On the other hand, the sorts of situations they should tell an adult about include physical injury, safety concerns, bullying, abuse, and any other threatening behavior. Children should know that if they witness a dangerous situation, a hurt person, or some other issue that makes them uncomfortable, they have a supportive adult to go to for help.

Next, teach children to ask themselves these important questions.

“Is someone hurt?” “Is someone sick?”
“Is someone fighting?” “Is someone in danger?” “Is someone unsafe?”

Teach children to get the help of an adult when the answer to any of these questions is “yes.”

Stories that a child can relate to also go a long way in teaching children about tattling. A fun, children’s book that addresses tattling is *Penelope’s Headache: Tattle or Tale*. Told in rhyme, *Penelope’s Headache* is the story of a young child who cannot tell the difference between tattling and telling. Penelope and her mom work through several scenarios that require Penelope, and the reader, to decide whether the situation is tattling or telling. Additionally, the book includes two activities to rehearse when it is appropriate to tell.

Distinguishing between tattling and telling may seem easy to an adult, but for a child, recog-

nizing his or her own motives needs to be learned just like tying shoes or brushing teeth. Roleplay and frequent reminders can help children master the difference between tattle and tell.

Elementary age children need to learn how to compromise with their friends and how to resolve minor disputes. Adult intervention is sometimes necessary, but most of the time children can handle disagreements if they learn some conflict resolution strategies. If we teach our children the difference between tattling and telling early and often, along with ways to settle quarrels, they will have the tools they need to become successful communicators.



Cindy Goldberg has a master’s degree in elementary education and a certification in applied positive psychology. Cindy is an author, an expert in the field of social and emotional learning, and an elementary school teacher with more than 20 years of experience. Visit CindyGoldbergTeacher.com for activities to further explore the difference between tattling and telling.



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(Continuation from page 32)

years that a child begins to comprehend a world outside their frame of reference. They know that they, their family and their world have a history. Things that exist now may or may not have existed in the past. They may think that everyone needs money but they can also understand that salt was money to the men of sub-Saharan Africa, and they can understand both why and how it was used.

Children in this seven to 11-year-old group can also learn scientific and mathematical concepts that have universal applications. Water not only freezes, melts and evaporates in the classroom experiment, it behaves that way everywhere. A child anywhere in the world can look at a meter stick and accurately measure the length of a foot, the size of a bed, or the distance to the nearest school.

Yet, it is only after 12 years of age, as they enter their teens, that children can start to think in true and complete abstractions. They can understand that an equal sign indicates a special relationship between the totality of numbers and operations on one side of the sign with those on the other.

This ability to work with abstractions allows 12-year-olds to do algebra.

In science, these children can look at evidence and formulate a hypothesis, which they can test, measure and analyze. They can form conclusions from data. They understand cause and effect, consider possible outcomes,



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and project consequences for their actions. It is at this time that the ideas of justice, reward, punishment, control of the future and responsibility for the past become important to them.

This is why children of this age become intensely interested in fairness,

or at least their version of it. You hear a lot from them about what is “fair.” They are interested in how they are treated compared to others their age. They analyze everything, but because of an innate egocentricity, they can also justify anything. Their lack of experience and inability to project consequences far into the future make their concepts of cause and effect incomplete. Furthermore, their intellectual age does not

equal their emotional age. This is one of the reasons that the teen years are both wonderful and dangerous.

The nurturing, age appropriate experiences you give your child—starting at birth and continuing through each progressive level—aid your child in reaching developmental milestones. Understanding these milestones makes it easier to figure out, “Whatever were they thinking?” ■



Louise Butler is an award-winning educator with a passion for both the art and science of teaching. In December of 1996, Louise Butler made a presentation at the Global Summit on Science and Science Education in which she outlined the four components required of students to beat the bell curve and achieve the academic success that they deserve. Her book, Beating the Bell Curve, (in its second edition and available at Amazon.com) grew out of that presentation.

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Home Schooling as a Blended Family

By Latonya Moore

On any given day, you can find Jeremiah, Micah and Zachariah running around and having a grand time with two-year-old brother Nehemiah, trailing behind. These young guys are four of the five sons born to Brandon and Teresa Russell. The Russells are a blended family with three older children (two sons and a daughter) from previous relationships. After moving from the Midwest to Grand Prairie, Texas, a few years ago, the family decided to home school.

How did the Russell family begin their home school journey?

As young parents, Brandon and Teresa did not consider home educa-

tion an option. Teresa was a single mother when her oldest son entered school, but it was during this season of her life that she was first introduced to home education. Since learning of it, home schooling stayed in Teresa's mind even though she didn't see how she could do it at the time.

After becoming a blended family, Brandon and Teresa decided that

it would be best for Teresa to stay at home. As she became acclimated to this new way of life, Teresa found herself thinking again about home schooling. Reminders would come in the form of running into old friends who were on their own home education journey, and in meeting new friends who home schooled. The desire to home educate was slowly pressing into Teresa's heart.



Above:

1. top left graduation: Teresa and Isaiah
2. top center left: Brooklyn
3. top center right: Zachariah, Micah, and Jeremiah
4. top right: Brandon Jr.
5. top large: Nehemiah, Teresa, Brandon Sr., Josiah (baby), Jeremiah, Micah, and Zachariah

Right:

Minor prophets in training? Micah, Nehemiah, Jeremiah and Zachariah Russell

All images courtesy of Brandon and Teresa Russell



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The Russells decided the older children, now 13, 14 and 15 years old, would remain in public school, but the younger ones would start their academic careers at home.

How do Brandon and Teresa balance their public schooled teenagers with the new generation of home schoolers in their family?

It wasn't an easy decision to leave their older sons in public school, but Brandon thought the boys should give the schools in their area a try. Teresa has taken advantage of two education styles by primarily teaching the younger boys while the older ones are at school. The family supports the older kids by attending their public school events, and the older kids support the family by helping their home schooled brothers learn new things.



What does daily life look like in the Russell home?

With five younger sons ranging from seven years to three months old, there is never a dull moment. Teresa is the primary teacher with Brandon working long days during the week. The flexibility with home education is a great perk because it allows them to optimize their schedule to ensure the kids spend time with their dad.

Most days the family enjoys prayer and breakfast together. Afterwards, the older kids head off to school while the

young boys have play time before lessons begin. Mom takes this time to do some of the homemaking chores while caring for her infant and toddler.

If you were to call Teresa at any point during the day, you may learn that she is either cleaning, prepping something for home school, cooking dinner, or working on a project with her sons. And yet each day is unique in the Russell home.

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How has home schooling affected their family?

The Russell family's home school journey was faith-led, and it has been a positive aspect of their life. Mainly, they have been able to spend more time together. Brandon was initially able to be involved in the development and education of the younger boys as they transitioned into home education. The parents can truly train the children in the way they should go and help with any issues of the heart that may arise as they continue to grow and learn.

Teresa will be the first to admit that home schooling three young boys while caring for a toddler and infant, parenting teenagers, and nurturing a marriage can be a bit overwhelming, but she knows the benefits outweigh the difficulties. Home education is enjoyable, and Brandon and Teresa are grateful that they can give their sons

a better lens with which to see the world—an alternative to society's narrative. The boys are learning discernment and how to think for themselves.

Teresa enjoys sharing how home schooling has given Brandon and her the ability to do better for their younger children. The Russells have corrected the mistakes of their earlier years of parenting, and their older children can see that when you know better, you are truly able to do better. ■

"The parents can truly train the children in the way they should go and help with any issues of the heart that may arise as they continue to grow and learn."



Latonya Moore is a wife and home educating mother to two daughters. She is a creator at heart, and she spends her downtime writing at JoyintheOrdinary.com or designing faith-based jewelry for Alexandria's Authentically Made Jewelry (AuthenticallyMade.bigcartel.com).



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Lone Wolf No More

On the Importance of Supportive Community

By Candi Summers

Parents of special needs children often find themselves at a crossroads: they can insulate their children from the world and hope their babies will never face bullying, or they can venture out into the sun and set an example of how to treat those who are differently abled. I have always been very social and outgoing, but when my son was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder in early 2006, my world closed in on me. My daughter was diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome a year later. I went into a cocoon of my own making in an attempt to protect myself from the criticism and vulnerability I faced.

My children were different; and when your children are different, everyone is a critic. It was not just a struggle because of the way society reacted to my children's special needs; it was also a knife to the heart to see other children who did not have disabilities. It felt easier to stay in my house and in the safety of isolation. I ignored invitations to play dates. I avoided the park. I stayed away from the mall. With two more children added to the mix in the fall of 2006



Christina Tutt (center) and Candi Summers (right) enjoying THSC Convention - The Woodlands with some of their children.

and in 2008, there was no emotional energy left to spend on explaining to people why my son could not speak or why my daughter didn't make eye contact with them.

It took someone special to cut me out of that thick web—someone

JAMES MAKES PICKLED OKRA FROM VEGETABLES GROWN ON THE FARM.



The Tutts live on a farm in East Texas, which gives their children opportunities to learn animal husbandry, farming and home repair skills.

who wields a machete of love easily. Christina Tutt: Warrior. I speak of my best friend in epic terms because she truly changed the course of my life forever, and in the best ways. She called me to a level of parenting and faith that I would never have achieved without her; and I am so grateful to the Lord for her presence in my life. I have never met another person who bravely forges the path of living out James 1:27. Without regard for herself, she does what she believes Jesus would do. It has cost her a lot.

Christina and I met at a ladies conference in 2005, but we did not become friends until the summer of 2008. Christina extended an invitation to me by email to bring my four children for lunch at her house. It was simply the Holy Spirit that prompted me to accept. That is not something I typically would have done. I am still not even sure why I did it. My children with autism were difficult to take places, re-

Photos courtesy of Christina Tutt, Candi Summers and THSC

quired a higher level of supervision, and were misunderstood or unaccepted by most people. Christina was different. She made us all feel safe, accepted and loved in her home. She did not judge or criticize. She simply loved us as a family in practical ways.

It was under her discipleship that I realized that I should not continue to isolate myself and my children. Yes, it kept the “hat-

ers” out, but it also kept out love, wisdom, and community. Her example inspired me to a higher level of faith. Jesus calls us not just to believe, but also to act out our faith.

I chose to reach out to the parents of children who were newly diagnosed with autism. I began writing a weekly column for special needs parents in the local newspaper. Christina knew she could call on me to ride shotgun on ministry adventures, and

I began to take the lead on gathering women for fellowship. I even started a Girl Scout troop so my daughter with Asperger’s would have more social exposure. I still maintained my lone-wolf disposition when it came to my home schooling, however.

As someone who was home schooled as a child, I believe very strongly in the process. I trusted myself to know what would work best for my children, and I had no desire to join a larger group or attend conventions or conferences. That changed drastically after I saw just how vulnerable families are when they walk alone on this journey.

I will never forget the feeling of complete disbelief and utter terror when I got the call from Christina on November 21, 2013. “They took my kids, Candi.” Christina’s voice was shaky. My brain could not compre-

" 'They took my kids, Candi.'"

CHRISTINA'S VOICE WAS SHAKY. MY BRAIN COULD NOT COMPREHEND THE WORDS."

THE TUTT CHILDREN ATTENDED THE INAUGURATION OF GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT IN AUSTIN, TEXAS.



Christina and the children participate in their hometown parades and political events, and work as a family to minister to the homeless and those in need.

ENDING THE THREAT TO PARENTAL RIGHTS

While CPS certainly does protect many children in abusive or neglectful situations, flaws in the system give CPS the power to run rampant over the rights of parents of healthy families, ultimately hurting children.

Families under investigation by CPS find that the system, heavily stacked against them, enables situations where even safe, loving parents are considered guilty until proven innocent. The Tutt case is a prime example of how current rules governing CPS investigations allow for unjustified removals of children.

Being ripped from a safe, loving family negatively affects a child mentally, emotionally and physically. It is a life-changing event from which some children never fully recover.

THSC believes that it is imperative that the status quo change, which is why we are developing the Parent Child Protection Act. THSC is collecting recommendations, experiences and legal counsel to construct a large list of reforms to the CPS system. These important changes in family law will ensure parents are given due process, thereby protecting children from trauma and unnecessary removal from homes.

Currently, THSC is not aware of any other organization working on these reforms. Join us in *Keeping Texas Families Free*. Visit THSC.org/ParentChildProtectionAct.

Stephen Howsley serves as a policy analyst for Texas Home School Coalition.

"We spend a lot of time as home educators

hend the words. My heart sank as she relayed the events of that day. Armed constables at her door. The children being taken away without car seats—with nothing, not even shoes. Shan Robinson, the Child Protective Ser-

vices (CPS) caseworker, saying "I don't know," when Christina asked how to get her kids back.

I was six months pregnant with my fifth child, but I rolled up my sleeves, notified our friends, looked

for legal help, and did whatever I could for Trevor and Christina Tutt. Christina was a giver, and now it was my turn to help her. I spent countless hours in the ninth month of my pregnancy in the cold marble hallway of the Dallas Family Courthouse. I feel sick even thinking about that horrifying time. I still cannot comprehend what has happened to the Tutt family. The sheer miscarriage of justice and complete disregard for the law and CPS policy makes me ill, and it is not over.

At the time their children were taken, the Tutt's didn't know about Texas Home School Coalition. Having been home schooled myself, I knew THSC was the organization

CANDI SUMMERS (LEFT) AND CHRISTINA TUTT (RIGHT) HAVE LUNCH TOGETHER WITH THEIR CHILDREN.



The whole family deeply misses K, the only Tutt child still in state custody after nearly three years. Please pray for them and for K to remember she is a Tutt who is deeply loved by her family. Pray for justice to be done.

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focusing on independence. We can miss the boat when it comes to community."


we needed to contact. I was shocked to learn that home schooling was the primary reason CPS and the guardian ad litem were demanding the children stay in foster care. I knew the law in Texas, and this was so far outside of the purview of CPS, it was ridiculous. THSC's response when I called was the only positive thing in a sea of horrifying injustice. I understood for the first time the value of being part of a larger home schooling community. After what I have seen, I will never be without a THSC membership again, and I encourage families every day to join as well.

I believe that if the Tutts had been THSC members, their encounter with CPS would have ended differently.

THSC members have resources and instructions on handling a surprise CPS visit. THSC has worked tirelessly to reunite the Tutt family and continues their legal support to this day. The organization is a reflection of their many members across Texas. The power of THSC is the power of home schooling Texans united.

We cannot be lone wolves. We need one another—not only as parents, but as a home school community at large. No matter how educated,

careful, informed and proactive we are, there is more strength in numbers. We spend a lot of time as home educators focusing on independence. We can miss the boat when it comes to community. I have chosen to be active with THSC because I don't want anyone to experience what my best friend experienced. I want people to know the law and to hold our elected and appointed officials accountable to follow the law. The most effective way to do that is to work together. ■



Candi Summers lives in Arlington, Texas, with her five children and husband Nathan. Candi has served on the advisory board of THSC since 2015. Home schooled in Texas from 1980 to 1990, Candi now home schools her children. She loves reading, genealogy and trivia.

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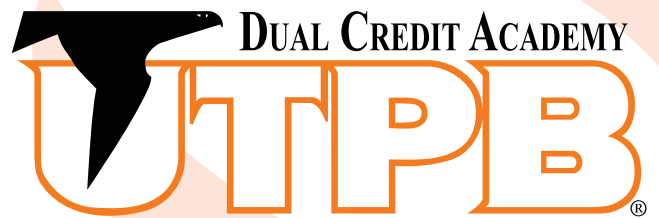
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UPDATE ON THE TUTT CASE

Trevor and Christina Tutt were licensed foster parents who worked closely with CPS for years, adopted a special needs child from foster care, and helped advocate and train other foster parents. They had no reason to be concerned when CPS came to their home in September 2013. The Tutts cooperated fully with the CPS caseworker called to their home by police after a child wandered from their home briefly. The child was not hurt, and was found less than an eighth of a mile from the Tutt home accompanied by their eight-year-old son. The CPS caseworker said there was no issue with the Tutt home or their parenting, but said that she wanted a psychological evaluation because, "Anyone who wants to stay home with this many kids must be crazy." This same caseworker later fraudulently changed a sworn affidavit to include statutory language that allowed removal of the Tutt children at the request of an unelected Dallas County judge.

Four of the Tutt children were returned to them on January 7, 2014, but they remain scarred by their time in foster care. K, the biological sister of two of the Tutts' adopted children, remains in foster care in spite of CPS policy and state law that require removal cases to be resolved within 18 months. Home schooling is the reason that CPS and K's court-appointed guardian give for keeping her from her home.

View the Tutt Family's Journey in infographic form, as well as numerous reports on the Tutt case at THSC.org/Tutts. ■



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THSC.org/Conventions

THSC Convention -The Woodlands

May 20-22, 2017

The Woodlands, Texas

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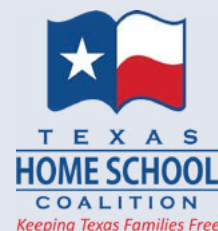
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The Texas Home School Coalition (THSC) is a 501(c)(3) educational organization that is supported by tax-deductible donations. THSC is dedicated to serving the home school community; it promotes home education in Texas by educating the public, the home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

THSC Association, a 501(c)(4) advocacy organization, is dedicated to *Keeping Texas Families Free*. It is supported by membership fees and donations. THSC Association membership benefits include legal assistance, as well as a long list of other offerings 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 **THSC.org** for more information.

Raising Moses

By Donna Schillinger

It's a familiar scene. Discussion time after the Beth Moore video lesson. A handful of women have managed to carve out 90 minutes to fellowship. The fly on the wall overhears most of the groups developing a variation on a theme: We never thought it would be so challenging to stay at home. The teaching was on the book of James. Why are we talking about being stay-at-home moms? I guess we're kind of obsessed with it.

Don't misunderstand—there's a real sense of gratitude for our stage and station in life. We love our children. We wouldn't have it any other way. But there's something else tugging at us. It feels like the promise of purpose and identity, but through the smoke, we can see a glint of light bounce off a mirror.

That education we are still paying for. That couple of years of professional experience that whetted our appetites for achievement, results, impact. That dream of a happy home balanced with a successful career. Pushed aside.

For the next 15 sacred minutes, we remind ourselves that this—what we're about now—is not an illusion. It is true purpose and true identity. This wet bed. This book report. This tenth time today to yell, “Flush and wash!” From this grain of sand atop these other grains of sand, we will build mountains.

On the drive home a thought hits me: I have no idea whom I am raising. I hope at a minimum he will be a good husband and father. But could I be raising this boy to be so much more? Who knows what work God has for him!

I found him in a basket among the reeds—a child statistically destined to underachieve. I brought him to suburbia and am raising him as my own. He gets the finer things: organic produce, a memory foam mattress topper, swimming lessons, a pet octopus. They teach him justice, mercy and humility in the white-pillared building with the cross on top.

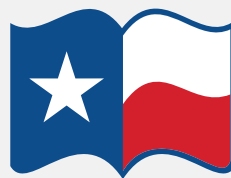
What are these the makings of? Could I be raising...Moses?

How would I know? You can't exactly see a Moses coming from a mile away. A Moses isn't like an Alexander the Great or a Beethoven. A Moses comes as a surprise—even to himself. A Moses only makes sense in retrospect. It's only looking backwards that it's clear he wasted no time mastering proper Egyptian and stone writing penmanship.

What if I'm raising a Moses? What if you're raising a Moses? Mothers, let us set our hands to this task as if we are. ■

Donna Schillinger serves as publications manager for Texas Home School Coalition.





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As a coalition impacting over 150,000 Texas home school families with a staff and volunteer network of hundreds, Texas Home School Coalition (THSC) connects and provides your family with invaluable advocacy, information, and support. THSC is the recognized authority on home education and parental rights in Texas. As such **you can depend on us to protect and support your freedom as a Texas family.**

THSC Members Help Shape History...

THSC is founded. Home schoolers push back against prosecution.

1986

THSC bill passed: Parents free to teach **driver's ed.**

1995

THSC bill passed: State **colleges** must end discrimination of home schoolers.

2003

THSC kills 2 bad bills giving doctors and grandparents ability to trump fit parents.

2013

1994
Texas Supreme Court: **Home schooling is legal.**

2001
THSC bill passed: Home schoolers free to participate in **dual credit classes.**

2007
THSC bill passed: public schools must allow home school students to take **PSAT tests.**

2016
THSC stands up to rogue judge and CPS for illegal removal of seven children.

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