

FAMILY TIMES

A Home-school Newsletter for New Testament Christians
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Family Times Home-School Curricula Reviews

The *Family Times* home-school reviews are now available on the web site. The file contains over a hundred reviews, including reviews of complete curricula, curricula for specific subjects, Bible study material, and many other materials. All reviews were written by members of non-institutional churches of Christ, most of them subscribers to *Family Times*. I hope you find the material useful.

Access is **free** to all of you who are current subscribers to *Family Times*. There are, of course, conditions for using this material, since it is copyrighted. Please read the terms of use before accessing the reviews. Other people who do not subscribe to *Family Times* can access the material for \$5.

To access the material, go to our *Family Times* web site at www.gospelway.com/familytimes and follow the links. You will need the access code which, for the current school year, is Deut6:6-9-2003 (when requested to do so you must type in this complete code exactly as it is shown above).

Those of you who have submitted reviews will no doubt notice that I may have done some revising. In some cases I had to omit material for the sake of length (even as it is the file is huge for an HTML file). I did other revising to fit the overall purpose. So some reviews received major revision, others little or none. If you find any problems with what is present under your name, by all means please let me know what you would prefer to have it say. I will try to accommodate where I think I can.

Also, it will quickly be clear that this is a first attempt. I anticipate that you will find (and I hope report to me) typos and other areas that need to be improved. Above all, I hope you will observe the many areas where we need more reviews and updated information. Please feel free to contact me with this information. The more info we have, the more useful the result will be.

Thanks again, and I hope you find this material to be of great help in your home schooling. And don't forget to tell all your friends about it.

Smelser Family Profile

by Bertina Smelser

We are Scott and Bertina Smelser of Gettysburg Pennsylvania area. We have five children, April (18), Adam (14), Brianne (10), Tabitha (6), and Zachary (2). We first began home schooling when April was about 6 years old. However, our reason was not by choice, but by necessity, since we were spending a year in the Czech Republic (then Czechoslovakia). After our return, we returned April to public school. A couple of years later we returned to the Czech Republic and home schooling. From there we moved to the Gettysburg area where we met many fellow Christians who home school. We were very impressed and ac-

tually surprised to learn that some folks home school because they want to, not need to! I know I had met the Prattes and others who home school; but until I was faced with it on a regular basis, I guess I didn't pay much attention.

With such a great group here in PA, we joined a Konos group within the congregation. The kids had such memorable and educational times! Gradually, we learned more and more about what works for us, and we continue to learn that even now! We do not use Konos anymore, but learned great ideas from it. All kids are not the same, which adds to the beauty of home schooling. We can choose what works best for each child.

We do most of our "core subject" work in the mornings, with other subjects spilling over into the afternoon. On many projects, it seems that this is just our lifestyle, and we don't consider limiting our work on these things to "school hours." We are basically home schooling all the time in lots of fun ways.

We do activities that qualify as home schooling year round, but we do the bulk of our work during the traditional "school year." We are very eclectic with our choices of materials. Some of our favorite choices have been online AP courses by PA Homeschoolers at the high school level, Rainbow Science at the middle school level, and Saxon Math until high school. We are trying Chalk Dust Algebra for the first time for Adam, now in the eighth grade. We are involved in a number of activities, such as 4-H, a home-school group with semi-monthly educational activities or trips, a writer's group, home-school chorus, and others. With several kids, it is a balancing act to decide which activities to join and which to skip. We have no thought of a socialization problem! We are blessed with a great group of peers who home school within the church and without. I am glad to say that a number of Bible studies and discussions have taken place as a result of contact with the home school group.

Our oldest daughter, April, has gone on to college at FC. It has been great to know that she has felt very well prepared for college after home schooling. That is something many people often wonder about. I, like everyone, have good days and bad days, but I love what we are doing and wouldn't trade places with anyone in the world. God bless all of you in your families.

Homeschooling Grows Up

By J. Michael Smith, HSLDA President, *Washington Times*, November 24, 2003

Every home-school family has confronted the question "Oh, you home-school. What about your child's socialization?" It's a question which reaches right to the heart of homeschooling, because if a child isn't properly socialized how can that child succeed?

Since the re-emergence of the home-school movement, in the late 1970's, critics of homeschooling have perpetuated two myths. The first concerns the ability of parents to adequately teach their own children at home; the second is whether home-school children will be well-adjusted socially.

Twenty-five years later, home-schoolers have demonstrated significant academic achievement, and Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) is unaware of any serious critics who still argue that home-schoolers struggle academically. To the contrary, home-schoolers consistently score 20 to 30 percentile points more than their public-school peers on standardized tests.

Proving academic success is relatively straightforward, because tests can be administered and immediate results determined. The second myth, however, is more difficult to address because children who were homeschooled in appreciable numbers in the late 1980's are only now coming of age and in a position to demonstrate they can succeed as adults.

Home-school families across the nation knew that criticisms about adequate socialization were ill founded - they had the evidence right in their own homes. Until recently, there had been no adequate research of home-schooled adults. A new study, titled 'Homeschooling Grows Up' was commissioned by HSLDA and conducted by Dr. Brian Ray of the National Home Education Research Institute (NHERI). It provides academically based research to support the numerous anecdotal examples of home-school success. More than 7,300 home-school graduates participated in the study. Of these respondents, more than 5,000 had been home-schooled for more than seven years and their responses were used to compile the study.

Many critics believe the main motivation for many home-schooling families is to retreat from society due to the negative influences present in the wider world. It's certainly true that home-schoolers are reacting against the problems in the public-school system but it is not true that home-schoolers are retreating from society.

In particular, the study shows that home-schoolers are fully engaged in civic affairs. More than 71 percent of home-schoolers surveyed participate in a voluntary, church or neighborhood association compared with 37 percent of U.S. adults.

Furthermore, home-schoolers demonstrate great commitment to their communities by voting in large numbers. More than 76 percent of home-school graduates aged 18 to 24 voted in a national or state election in the past 5 years compared with just 29 percent of 18 to 24 year old public-school graduates.

Many organizations have raised the alarm about the declining numbers of young voters. It appears that the answer is homeschooling. Only 4.2 percent of home-schoolers thought that government and politics were too difficult to understand, compared with 35 percent of the general U.S. population.

The willingness to participate in the electoral process, and belong to civic groups proves that home-schoolers are focused on engaging with the wider society rather than remaining on the sidelines.

Home-schoolers not only are actively engaged in civic life, they also are succeeding in all walks of life. Many critics believed, and many parents feared, that home-schoolers would not be able to compete in the job market. But the study showed that home-schoolers are found in a wide variety of professions. Being home-schooled has not closed doors to career choices.

The results are a great encouragement to all home-schooling families and to parents thinking about homeschooling. Communities across America are also benefiting because home-school families are producing able citizens at a fraction of the cost of a traditional public education. The average public school spends \$6,000 per student per year; the average home-school spends just \$600 per student per year.

The myths surrounding homeschooling are being torn down. Home-schoolers, typically identified as being high academic achievers, are also making the grade in society.

"Homeschooling Grows Up" amply demonstrates that home-school graduates are active, involved, productive citizens. The belief that home-schoolers would struggle socially is exposed as a false assumption based on opinion rather than fact. As more and more people realize the benefits of home-schooling the greater the positive impact on society. Home-school families are the leading edge of excellence in American education, and this study clearly demonstrates that the home-school community is on the right path.

To read a synopsis of the study please visit www.hslda.org.

A Penny Saved and a Stitch in Time

by Janet Metzger

*****Some websites and advice for traveling

If your schedule is flexible enough, there are parts of the country that are much cheaper to visit during certain times of the year. I've heard that winter is a great time (price-wise) for visiting Chicago. Most of the major attractions, such as the aquarium, planetarium, Field Museum, Museum of Science and Industry are free on Mondays and Tuesdays which can save a bundle for a family. The internet is a wonderful resource tool for finding good deals.

www.southwest.com has one-way tickets for as low as \$34 to a different featured location every couple of weeks. If you sign up, they will notify you by email when certain specials are available.

www.travelcoupons.com is a good resource for finding discount hotels.

Two other sites to try are www.roomsaver.com and www.rebateplace.com

*****To save on printer ink

When printing from the computer, go under 'properties' and choose 'draft'. It uses less ink and is not noticeably lighter unless you hold the slightly lighter version next to a full-ink copy.

*****Crisis Cleaning

This is advice from 'The Fly Lady':

CHAOS (Can't Have Anyone Over Syndrome) Grab a timer and start cleaning in the kitchen. When the timer goes off, move to the living room, then on to the bathroom. After three 15-minute sessions, sit down and rest for 15 minutes. Then do three more sessions. This is surface leaning: It's not the time to clean out a closet.

(And, as always, if you have children and/or a willing husband-Don't forget to delegate!)

From the Editors

Our thanks to our regular contributors for their articles in this issue: Janet Metzger, Sally Anne Perz, and Martha Hollingsworth. See our note later about Wayne Walker's article.

Delays and Interruptions

by Martha Hollingsworth

It seems as if I just get a good “rhythm” going in my day, and I am interrupted ... phone calls, visitors, and the usual household interruptions that occur naturally on a daily basis. It can be very annoying and discouraging. What can be done? Well, I still have problems, but I thought I would share a few of the things that have helped me over the last 10 years...

Phone Calls

It would never fail, I would just get going and the phone would ring. The first thing I tried was the answering machine. That works, but there are some drawbacks. For one thing, it seemed as if everyone would stop what they were doing and listen to see who it was and the message. The other thing, in my case, was that someone was always calling for a “favor.” I am the type of person who has a hard time saying no. They would leave a message such as, “Aunt Martha are you there? I forgot my (book, lunch, jacket, money, etc.) at home, can you bring it to school for me?” And, of course, it was always in this sweet little voice that they know I can’t resist. The adults were not much better. “Martha are you there?” “Pick up the phone it’s *really* important!” Then it would be my aunt saying there was a really great yard sale up the road. (Normally that would be important, but during school it isn’t).

We then tried shutting the answering machine off and just letting the phone ring, or shutting the phone off completely. That was a problem for us. My husband needed to be able to get in touch sometimes to let me know that he was working over or needed me to do something. So, this year we are trying something different. We have a “code.” There are about 3 people who know our code: my husband and a couple of people who keep an eye on my disabled father. I will now share it with all of you, and hope you won’t ask me to take your child’s lunch money to “school.” Ha, Ha! Our code is: let the phone ring 3 times, hang up, ring 3 times, hang up, and then when it starts ringing again I know to pick it up. We had to change from 1 hang-up to 2 because some people would hang up thinking they had dialed the wrong number and ring again. You can, of course, come up with your own code.

Visitors

Most people can be told that you are home schooling and they take the hint not to come by during school hours. Others, however, need a little more persuasion. What caused the biggest interruption for us were the people who would stop by for “just a minute” to: drop this off or tell you something. Of course, 1 minute turns into 2 and so on. Another thing we have started this year is a “Courtesy Sign.” We made 2 signs for our front and back doors. On each there is a note stating that school is in session, the hours, and when we break for lunch. It asks them to please be considerate and come after those times. It isn’t fool-proof, but it has helped a lot. It does make some of them feel guilty anyway.

Day-to-Day Interruptions

Probably the most interruptions for us occur with our household duties: laundry, dishes and such. It was useless to tell me to “clean the house and do your laundry before you go to bed.” This is a big challenge for me. By bedtime I am exhausted. I only do what I absolutely *have* to do. The answer for me was organization, scheduling, and getting up earlier. I highly recommend Manager’s of Their Homes by the Maxwell’s. It has helped a lot in delegating time slots for the subjects that need my assistance with each child. Plus it helps me to allow enough time for prayer and bible study first thing in the morning before the youngins get up. I try to “straighten” the house (not clean ... I save that for Saturdays), start the laundry and dishwasher and get dressed before we start schoolwork. I don’t always get up by my 6 AM schedule, and I can always notice a big difference in how much I can accomplish.

I also took time out to “declutter” our home. When you have 20 little doodads on a shelf it takes a lot longer to dust than if you have only 5 or 6!! You might want to give www.flylady.com a try. It gives you lots of great little ideas for decluttering in 15-minute doable time frames. Simplifying has become a new byword lately, and I think it has a definite benefit. It has certainly helped me to have more time for getting our schoolwork done and to have more family time.

These are just a few things that I have tried over the years. I would love to see other suggestions from the rest of you. Something that you do to help with interruptions could be just the thing for someone else who is discouraged.

We welcome articles by our subscribers! Please keep them coming!

A Review of the Comprehensive Curriculum of Basic Skills Series

By Sally Anne Perz

Many home schoolers use a rather eclectic approach to teaching, employing a variety of methods and materials. Those that take this approach often use a more relaxed style of teaching in certain subjects and may be concerned about whether their children are performing at grade level. Though we recognize that all children learn and progress differently, most parents want their children to "make the grade." For those who do not use standardized testing or "school in a box" (not meant derogatorily) there is an easy option available. McGraw Hill/American Education Publishing has produced a series called the *Comprehensive Curriculum of Basic Skills*. These books introduce and reinforce basic skills for pre-kindergarten through sixth grade.

Comprehensive Curriculum books retail individually for \$20, but can often be found at Sam's Club for less than half of that price. They are kid friendly: full color, fun and informative. Subjects included are: Reading, English, Reading Comprehension, Math and Spelling (also included within the other headings are phonics, grammar, and writing). The books include teaching suggestions and answer keys in the back. They are about 500 pages each. The pages are perforated, but we find it to be more orderly to only remove the pages that require cutting. As far as the grade levels go, the books are on target for most subjects. Some children may find certain subjects more challenging than others; this is easy to work with and does not detract from the usefulness of the books.

For pre-kindergarten and kindergarten, reading is not required. These books are geared for parent interaction or aid from older siblings! They simply introduce subjects such as reading readiness and math skills. They are a good activity to provide some desk time and to help children learn to give attention to a task. They are great for children who want to "do school" like their older siblings. In addition, they are fun! They include cutting, pasting, and other easy to do activities (but not so much of this that it becomes burdensome for the less than crafty among us!). For those little ones who can already read, this is a fun activity to reinforce reading skills and following instructions. The young readers can easily work independently.

Books for grades one through six are geared for students who are able to read. For those who are looking for supplemental material only, these are a perfect choice. For those who want to introduce skills without using other written material, there may be some explanation required. I have found that there is often very little explanation needed for the children to work independently, even if the subject matter is new to them. For those that are good readers and have been exposed to good literature, most of the exercises will "come naturally" to them. Those who struggle with reading and writing may need more parent interaction, or to work in a book that is below their grade level.

In addition to these books, McGraw Hill/American Education Publishing also produces a variety of other activity workbooks. We have enjoyed these as well; they are so much more fun than coloring books! These make great travel books and are also good for kids with special interests, as they have titles covering nearly all subjects. Some of our favorites are *Bible Activities*, *Time and Money*, and *The Complete Book of Animals*.

Home Schooling a Dyslexic Child

By Stephanie Farmer

Imagine a world without Thomas Edison and his light bulb, Henry Ford and his car, Albert Einstein and the theory of relativity, Sir Winston Churchill, and many others. These are words I use when my son becomes flustered with his dyslexia. You can see all these famous people and others listed at this website <http://www.dyslexia.com/qafame.htm>

Hi my name is Stephanie Farmer and I have two boys, Marcus and Matthew. Matthew, age 10, is my dyslexic. He has made great strides at learning to deal with it, especially in the past 12 months. He has mirror image dyslexia, which is the ability to write something so that you can perfectly read it in a mirror. Today he rarely inverts his letters and numbers. Now that he has learned the "code" his reading and writing skills are beginning to speed up.

You see, written language is a code. Letters and numbers are just figures on a piece of paper that have to be interpreted. Dyslexics interpret this information differently than others, which causes problems. Not only that, but while we use only one side of our brain, dyslexics use both at the same time; thus,

when they invert their numbers and letters it often means they "got their wires crossed." Yet they can be taught to recognize and fix the problem.

Have you ever noticed how a child can act like they are not listening while you are reading a science lesson, but when you ask them a question they can give you a detailed answer? That is because they are using their total brain! This also explains their deep questions, and their inability to sit still as their minds are always at work.

2002-2003 has been a great year for Matthew. In order to build up his self-esteem, he is in 4-H. This year he ranked very high in the Florida State Fair champion youth contest in the sheep division which, involved poster making, a record book, a project story, a speech, and written tests. He helped his 4-H team win 2nd in state in the Wildlife Contest with the 2nd-highest score in our group. He went on to win Champion Showman at the Florida Strawberry Festival with his sheep and he just won 3rd place in a 4-H dairy poster contest. All of these accomplishments came from a mirror image dyslexic, who is learning to adapt.

You see, at the age of 8 3/4 a little voice in the backseat of my car asked, "Mom, if I quit writing my letters and numbers backwards will I be dumb?" For the last 2 years I had told him of Edison, Ford etc. "No, I replied, they were extra smart because they had to work harder than most people to learn to read and write. This gave their brains more exercise and thus they became smarter. The problem still existed, but they just learned how to recognize and correct it." "Well, I have discovered that if I concentrate really hard I don't make them backwards! I will show you tomorrow in school." He did and still corrects himself to this day!

I asked Matthew a few days ago how he controls his dyslexia and what helps him the most. This is what we came up with. I have always told him that this is something he has to learn to control himself. I cannot do it for him. Thus I bought him a digital watch which also counts out the seconds (he says this is one of the biggest factors). When he did his math and inverted a number, I had him double check on his watch. Eventually, he started to recognize when a number was not right and would double check his theory on his watch.

Dyslexics have a hard time remembering 2 or more steps. I will tell Matthew to go throw something in the recycling bin and water the sheep. Once outside he would forget what he was to do. Math is a great help. In 3rd grade, I gave him a times table chart and then taught him the steps to multiplication and division. It would take a couple of weeks per concept, but when he gets it, he holds onto it. I give him a chore list with chores listed out before each meal and number them. These things really helped him to remember things in a sequence. For reading and teaching blends, I use A Beka phonics cards. I also read, read, and read to him. One mom I know kept her finger under each word to help her child recognize words. Don't limit yourself to Dr. Seuss, but try the Children's Illustrated Classic series.

Don't squelch his ability to dream. The school system and the world gives them medicine to "calm them down," etc. Why?! Dreams are what great things are of! Remind your child of Edison, Ford, and John Muir etc., and read about their childhood. Help them feel good and confident about who and what they are. Edison was even called "addled" by his teacher! That is why we are in 4-H. I remember in 2001 after a written sheep test at the State Fair Matthew came out beaming and proudly said, "I can do what the other kids can!" (They did help him read and write, but did so in such a way he felt he was still like the other kids!)

Today Matthew is still not reading and writing like others, but he does take Jr. High Physics and understands the concepts. So much so, he explains some concepts to his older brother, when he doesn't understand. Ever since he decided he can control his dyslexia, he is making great strides as seen by his accomplishments this year in 4-H and by his home-school evaluator.

Yes, there are tears and frustrations at times, but he is very intellectual. One Bible teacher said, "Matthew is something else, when I read out of a book, he is the **only one** to stop me and say, 'Excuse me, but what you are reading is not accurate.' Then he will give me a detailed explanation from the Bible as to why that particular statement is not true!"

Another Bible teacher said, "He squirms and fiddles so much it seems he is not listening but when you ask him questions he can answer every single one!" So, remember these dyslexics are very intellectual and think differently, which is why so many are successful. They definitely think **outside** the box! And most importantly try not to let the paper and pencil slow them down!

If any of you moms need an understanding ear you can call me at 813-737-4091 or email me at psmm@att.net Thanks! There are times I feel lonely and flustered too!

The Thompsons

by Dawn Thompson

Peter and I have four children. They are Nathan (11yo/5th grade), Noble (9yo/4th grade), Katie (7yo/2nd grade), and Blake (5yo). We live in Madison, a small town on the Ohio River in southeast Indiana.

Our interest in home schooling began a number of years before we had children. I was teaching in a public school in Alabama. I had a 45-minute commute, during which I often listened to a news program. One week they had a series on home schooling that really intrigued me. And believe me, my teaching experience did a lot to convince us that public school was not for us.

Through the years between when I heard that series and when our oldest turned five we heard more and more about home schooling. Several family members were home schooling, as were a number of our friends. We lived in Dayton, OH, at that time and knew we definitely did not want our children to attend their schools. I knew I wanted to home school, but Peter wasn't quite as sure. We attended the state home-school convention, and he was sold. He was especially impressed with the quality and availability of various curricula.

We have used A Beka materials for most of our studies. We really like their phonics. The three older children learned to read quickly and easily, and we anticipate that Blake will do the same. When I was in school I never disliked writing assignments nor found them difficult, but I don't enjoy teaching writing skills. (Grammar, yes. How to write a descriptive paragraph or short report, no.) It is a good thing that A Beka's language program calls for a good bit of writing, or I'm sure I'd neglect it, especially since the children do not like to write. I'd love to skip all the writing assignments, but I make us go through it. It's good discipline for all of us. Besides, they need to know how to write well. I think it's a pity that so few people do seem to write well these days.

We switched Nathan to Saxon math this year. He finds it to be a lot of work, but Peter and I are pleased with it. I love algebra, and am looking forward to that.

We try to finish our bookwork each day by lunchtime or shortly thereafter. I won't say it always happens! The kids' attitudes make all the difference, and that is an area on which we are focusing a lot of attention. In the afternoon, Nathan and Noble have paper routes to do. They also have piano lessons once a week. Katie is taking a break from piano right now, but we hope to start lessons again in a few months.

This year the kids and I thoroughly enjoyed participating in our local home school group's book club. We read through the *Little House* books. Each session we would discuss the current book, do crafts, sample foods, play games, and do other activities relating to that book.

We occasionally go to professionally staged plays in Louisville. We get great prices on matinee sessions attended by the schools. Our favorite play so far is probably *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*.

We follow a pretty traditional school year schedule, but are happy for the flexibility to take time off as needed. For instance, we have gone to all the HS Campouts (in Sept. and Oct.). We highly recommend them. It's a great week! This year we finished up our formal schooling on May 22, and we celebrated by going to Kings Island's Home-school Day on the 23rd.

Often when I tell people that we home school, their reaction is, "That must be quite a challenge." My usual response is, "Yes, it is — but worth it!" We could make a lot of improvements, I know, but I still feel that my children are getting a better academic education than they would in public school, and more importantly, better moral and spiritual training.

A Review of Horizons Math

by Donna Craig

I recall a day when my then 11th-grader came to me and said, "I need help with my math." Did I answer, "Why, of course, dear, how can I help you?" No, my immediate response was, "Are you sure I'm going to know how to do it?" (As it turned out, I did know. Sort of.) This should tell you something about me and math.

When that same daughter was approaching fourth grade, Saxon was all the rage. Did I rush out and buy a copy of Saxon 54 for her to use? No, I tried Miquon Math instead. For her, it was better than Bob Jones Math (which she had been using) because it used a spiral approach like Saxon, but it was not interesting to her or her sisters that followed, in spite of all those pretty Cuisenaire rods. Finally, I reasoned

that maybe the “narrow way” principle didn’t necessarily apply to mathematics. If everyone was using Saxon, there was probably a good reason for it.

We use Saxon beginning with 54 up to algebra and are quite satisfied with it. My children do well in math, most of the time the grades falling somewhere in the 80’s and 90’s, which I consider satisfactory for children who have declared that math is not their cup of tea.

So, of course, when Saxon put out their K-3 program, I automatically bought it, right? Wrong. The main reason that I did not buy it is because I did not want to spend that much money on it. Sometimes money is an object.

Instead, we use Alpha Omega’s Horizons Math. The joy in using it is that it also uses a spiral approach like Saxon. The workbooks are very well done with large text and colorful pictures. The lessons are two pages long (front and back of a page) with each tenth lesson actually being a review and also taking the fronts and backs of two pages. Each year requires two consumable workbooks, and they run about \$12.50 each, the last I saw.

The workbooks claim to begin at kindergarten level. When I ordered my first set of first-grade workbooks for my first-grader, I took one look at them, put them away and ordered the kindergarten level. These books are advanced. So, for kindergarten, let your child play with all the cool math manipulatives you can buy (Wal-Mart is a good source) and another workbook if you wish (perhaps Spectrum). Then begin them with Horizons Math K in the first grade. We used Horizons Math 1 for second grade, Horizons Math 2 for third grade and proceeded to Saxon 54 after that without any trouble.

There is also a teacher’s notebook for each grade, but I stopped buying them. It seems that Alpha Omega likes to revise these sets of math books about every five years which, for us, meant I would have to buy a new teacher’s notebook (and they are not inexpensive) about three times before I had all of my children through second grade. Besides, I reasoned, this is basic math after all and I should know how to teach those basic concepts plus do the problems myself in order to grade their worksheets. (And if I checked each day’s work as it was completed with my child looking on, it afforded me an instant teaching moment.)

If you think you need a little help in explaining the elementary math concepts to your children, then consider buying Kathryn Stout’s *Maximum Math*. It has wonderful tips on explaining every math concept that your children will encounter through grade 8, and the book is a lot less expensive than buying all those teacher notebooks for Horizons.

I would recommend that anyone who finds the spiral approach to math appealing to consider using the Horizons Math program at least for those first few years, even over Saxon K-3. I don’t think you will be disappointed.

Horizons Math can be ordered from: Alpha Omega Publications 1-800-622-3070

Maximum Math can be ordered from: Rainbow Resource Center www.rainbowresource.com

Geography Bee Winner

Via Citizen Link - 5/23/2003

The winner of this year's National Geography Bee is James Williams of Washington state -- a home-schooler. That seems to be something of a trend.

A home-schooled student has won the National Geography Bee three of the last five years. Said Michael Smith, president of the Home School Legal Defense Association: "Even more astounding is the percentage of home-schoolers in the finals and semifinals; it's like 30-40 percent, when we make up about 2 percent of the population."

He credits the fact that home schooling allows students to pursue what they enjoy.

"Obviously, you couldn't drive a child to learn this much geography to win this contest," Smith said. "They have to like it."

This year's winner, James Williams, is eligible to compete in the World Championship in July.

EDITORIAL NOTES

Please let us express again our great appreciation to all of you who submitted the reviews that are now on the *Family Times* web site. And thanks also to all of you who submitted material for this issue of *Family Times*. Thanks especially for the articles submitted by Bertina Smelser, Donna Craig, Dawn Thompson, and Stephanie Farmer. I apologize that we did not have room for Raising Godly Children or Wayne Walker’s article about using historical fiction in teaching history. Look for them next time.