

FAMILY TIMES

A Home-school Newsletter for New Testament Christians
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All subs run by school year. Subs sent after September receive back issues. Subscriptions are 3 years by email for \$6.

See our web site for past issues of *Family Times* and reviews of home-school materials

December, 2005 – February, 2006

Notice of *Family Times* Changes

The editors would like to notify our subscribers of the following major changes at *Family Times*:

PAST ISSUES OF *FAMILY TIMES* ON OUR WEB SITE

First, as an added benefit to our readers, we have posted issues of *Family Times* for the past several years on our web site, and we intend to post all future issues there. Access to these past issues will be available without charge to all *Family Times* subscribers who keep their subscription current, but will require use of our access code. The same code that you use to access our online reviews will also access past issues. This code is available in the heading of each issue of *Family Times*.

EMAIL SUBSCRIPTIONS AFTER JUNE, 2006

Second, we have made the executive decision that, effective with the end of the current school year (that is, following the issue for June, 2006), we will eliminate mailing out printed copies of *Family Times* by regular mail. Printing and mailing regular mail issues makes significant additional work and expense. To simplify our work considerably we have determined that all subscriptions following June of 2006 will be email subscriptions only.

To obtain a printed “hard copy” of any issue, formatted similar to our older issues, any subscriber can go to the web site and print out a copy. We anticipate that future issues of *Family Times* will maintain the same basic format as recent issues, except we will not be as concerned about careful placement of page breaks and total number of pages of content.

So, effective immediately, we will no longer accept new regular mail subscriptions. Regular mail subscriptions that we have already received will be converted to email, as of June, 2006, on a pro-rata basis (the cost of an email subscription is \$6 for three years, so the remaining portion of any regular mail subscription will be applied to provide an extended email subscription). This, of course, requires that our regular mail subscribers wish to convert to email. To convert to email, please be sure to send us your current email address. And we will, of course, gladly issue a refund for the unused portion of your subscription price to anyone who wishes to discontinue your subscription rather than switch to email (we sincerely hope that few of you would so choose, but we will honor your choice).

We realize that this decision may create a problem for those few subscribers who do not have email. But we do have some suggestions to help. (1) Of course, you might consider getting Internet access. The Internet is a source of so much valuable research, that your home-schooled children need to learn to use it. (2) You can access the Internet for free at any library (or at a friend’s house). You can get a free email

address at yahoo.com and other web sites. (3) Or you could simply skip email and go to our web site and print out a hard copy of *Family Times* each quarter (but this still requires that you be a subscriber).

We sincerely hope that this will not be a great problem for any of you. We do not wish to lose any subscribers. But the decreased workload will make a big difference for us and may, in fact, make the difference between continuing the newsletter vs. discontinuing it altogether. And remember, we will gladly reimburse anyone who contacts us and asks to discontinue your subscription.

One final point to remember is that subscribers must keep us notified of any changes in email addresses. Due to spam and other concerns, some people change email addresses relatively often. Whatever your reason for changing, **please remember to contact us whenever you change email addresses, so you do not miss any issues of *Family Times*.**

NEW EMAIL ADDRESS

Yes, another new email address for *Family Times*. Between spam, viruses, and other forms of email abuse, we have determined to completely eliminate use of our gospelway.com domain name for email purposes. Effective immediately our new email address is studylessons-1@yahoo.com. Please remove all previous email addresses from your address books. Note that submissions of reviews for family times should continue to be sent to Wayne Walker at wswalker310@juno.com.

Math Program Reviews

compiled by Wayne S. Walker

If you were to ask ten youngsters in school what the subject which they most dislike is, I would guess that nine out of ten would probably say, "Math!" And I suspect that this is just as true for homeschooled students as for those in public schools. I know that I was one of those "math haters" in school, and our son Mark seems to be following in my steps. The traditional "three 'r's" that form the basis of a good education are reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic. Reading and writing pertain to the use of letters and words, and arithmetic (mathematics) pertains to the use of numbers. These are the two basic ways in which we communicate ideas to one another — letters/words and numbers. A child who is well grounded in the use of letters and words (phonics and grammar) and in the use of numbers will have an excellent foundation from which he can learn just about anything else that he wants.

In Mark's first grade, we were sent Accelerated Christian Education Pace booklets from the School of Tomorrow by the McGuffey Academy with whom we had enrolled him. It was all right, but it really did not accomplish what we wanted, so after that first year, we used the Mott Media Classic Curriculum that is coordinated with Ray's Arithmetics for his grades two through four. Since the Classic Curriculum workbooks do not go past grade four, I used Spectrum Math Workbooks from McGraw Hill for his grades five and six. However, these did not seem to accomplish what we wanted, so beginning in seventh grade, we began using Saxon Math. He did 7/6 his first year, and while it was still a struggle he began to make some improvement. For his eighth grade work we did Algebra 1/2, in which he did much better, and for his freshman year we are using Saxon Algebra 1. Therefore, when Jeremy, who has done Ray's Arithmetic from the start, finishes the Classic Curriculum workbooks, we plan to go directly into Saxon Math for his fifth grade work.

In this article, I shall repeat some comments from previous reviews that I have done of the first three — Accelerated Christian Education, Mott Media Classic Curriculum with Ray's Arithmetics, Spectrum Math Workbooks, then follow them with some reviews submitted by others. I will save Saxon for someone else. Twice on the HomeSchoolers e-mail list I have solicited snapshot reviews of other math programs but received very few. No one has offered to share with us his or her experiences using some of the best known math programs used by homeschoolers, such as A Beka, Bob Jones, Alpha Omega/Horizons, Math U See, etc., so we shall have to make do with what we have received.

Accelerated Christian Education (ACE)

This curriculum contains four core subjects - English, math, social studies, and science — taught through self-contained and self-instructional four-color worktexts called PACES (twelve per subject per year, each with a teacher's key), which are written in bite-sized pieces, especially suitable for slower learners. The emphasis is heavily traditional and back-to-basics with little stress on hands-on projects or thinking skills and features lots of drill and fill-in-the-blanks. While some consider it unexciting and without creativity, ACE students have been shown significantly to outperform public school students.

ACE is a very easy program to administer for the teacher because the curriculum is mostly self-instructional. It is equally easy for the student in early grades to follow. The layout is straightforward and logical, with a lot of repetition and texts that are printed in nice, clear type. It does move more slowly through material in the first couple of grades, but the writers feel that it is better to spend more time with the basics before jumping into more advanced studies. In first grade math, the student learns numbers in symbol and name from zero to ten, counting from zero to one hundred, and simple addition and subtraction.

(Reviewed by Wayne Walker)

Ray's Arithmetics and Mott Media Classic Curriculum

The seven volumes of the Ray's New Arithmetics were originally published from 1877 to 1883 as a revision of an earlier work. Today, they are available for use again as reprinted in 1985 by Mott Media Inc. Organized in an orderly manner around the discipline of arithmetic itself, they present principles, progressing systematically from the simple to the complex, follow up each one with examples, and then include difficult problems to challenge the student so that he must rely on his arithmetic ability to answer the questions. This is arithmetic the old-fashioned way, with hard work rather than all the bells and whistles.

While the books are not graded and each student can proceed at his own pace, Mott Media does provide a suggested scope and sequence for the Ray's Arithmetics. They have also added a Parent-Teacher Guide written by Dr. Ruth Beechick. In addition, they have provided a series of workbooks, four for each year from grades one through four, written by Dr. Rudy Moore, which are keyed to Ray's Primary and Intellectual Arithmetics. As children progress through each workbook, they are referred to the appropriate lesson and exercises in the various texts.

One of the benefits of Ray's Arithmetics is that they emphasize mental arithmetic to precede written arithmetic as a means to assure understanding, moving children through the manipulative stage, the mental image stage, and the abstract stage. Another advantage is that they emphasize real life problems in which the student must decide whether to add, subtract, multiply, or divide. They are definitely not easy, but they are good. They forced me to sharpen my own mathematic skills while trying to shepherd our boys through them.

(Reviewed by Wayne Walker)

Spectrum Math

The Spectrum Workbooks were originally published by McGraw-Hill, and this company still sells them, but they are now listed as published by School Speciality Publishing, which is a division of Frank Schaffer Publications. In this series, there are books for grades K through 8 in reading, writing, language arts, phonics/word study, spelling, geography, and math. It is said that these "workbooks build a solid foundation for learning so that you can be assured that the skills practiced at home will prepare students to meet the challenges of modern life. Experienced educators from across the country have contributed to these materials, which have been approved by every state's Department of Education." I have seen them for sale in religious bookstores that carry homeschool materials, homeschool conventions, and homeschool catalogues such as Christian Book Distributors.

They appear to be designed as supplements to any standard curriculum for either classroom or home usage, but they cover such a broad range of material in each subject that it seems that with a little work one could almost possibly use them as a complete curriculum. They are not written from a uniquely "Christian" perspective, but I did not find the ones that we used to be anti-Christian or ungodly, as is the case with some materials used in the government schools. They simply focus on the basic skills involved in learning such disciplines as arithmetic the way they used to be when many of us went to public school and actually learned something by continual review and practice in the fundamentals. My only complaint about Spectrum Math is that it just moved on from one concept to the other rather quickly without much place for reviewing skills already learned. This is one reason that we switched to Saxon Math.

(Reviewed by Wayne Walker)

Saxon Math

We use Saxon math, and have, with one child or another, for the past 8 years. We chose it because it has always been so highly recommended, and it has worked well for the children. However, my soon-to-

be sixth grader is longing for a change, and we will probably try something else this coming year (what to choose, what to choose!)

I believe that Saxon is a bit short on explanation of “why” in explaining some concepts. It explains how, but there is very little in the way of “why” sometimes, and I believe more “why” would be helpful. Also, a child with a quick grasp of mathematics can become very bored with the continual review. That said, though, it is a very solid program - so many users and recommendations can't be wrong.

One advantage to Saxon is that it can always be purchased used. I have bought a new set only once or twice in all this time. The used prices are a nice savings!

This is a most unexciting review, but, though Saxon is so good, it's not an exciting program!

(Reviewed by Gerry Wright)

Math Advantage and Switched on School House

I've homeschooled for 1 1/2 years. We started using Math Advantage like the public school uses. I really did like this curriculum because it is so simple. My children would read the left page and do the right page. I rarely had to explain anything. You probably haven't heard of it because it is mostly used by the Public Schools. I pulled my children mid-year a couple of years ago and didn't have a clue where to start. I bought a copy of Math Advantage just like they had in school so they could “continue” where they were. I liked the format so I used it for the next year. I know some other homeschool Christians who also use it and like it. Math Advantage is put out by Harcourt and Brace (www.hbschool.com). I bought a couple of my copies from a semi-local used homeschool book store.

I did change toward the end of this school year. The reason for the change was one of my two sons had trouble with reading his own writing. He understands math but would make careless mistakes because of poor penmanship. I am working hard with him on penmanship but I felt while he is working on math is not the time. (He has poor fine motor skills.) So, hence the change. I bought Switched on Schoolhouse Math 5th grade level. It has helped his self esteem in math. He no longer makes “careless” mistakes. It cut down on my frustration level being aggravated about sloppy math and missing problems because of messy writing. I hope one day to switch back to a math book but for now this is wonderful. Also the scope and sequence seems complete.

(Reviewed by Carol McPeak)

Judicial Supremacists Lash Out At Parents

Nov. 16, 2005 by Phyllis Schlafly

When Hillary Clinton proclaimed that it takes a village to raise a child, many people didn't realize that she was enunciating liberal dogma that the government should raise and control children. This concept fell on fertile soil when it reached activist judges eager to be anointed as elders of the child-raising village.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit just ruled that parents' fundamental right to control the upbringing of their children “does not extend beyond the threshold of the school door,” and that a public school has the right to provide its students with “whatever information it wishes to provide, sexual or otherwise.”

Instead of using the “village” metaphor, the judges substituted a Latin phrase that has the same effect. *Parens patriae* (the country as parent) was a legal concept used long ago by the English monarchy, but it never caught on in the United States and the few mentions of it in U.S. cases are not relevant to this decision.

The Ninth Circuit case, *Fields v. Palmdale School District*, was brought by parents who discovered that their seven- to ten-year-old children had been required to fill out a nosy questionnaire about such matters as “thinking about having sex,” “thinking about touching other people's private parts,” and “wanting to kill myself.” The parents were shocked and looked to the court for a remedy.

No such luck. We live in times when judges (especially on the Left Coast) seize opportunities to create new law and new government powers even if they have to hide behind a Latin phrase of bygone years unknown to Americans.

The three-judge Ninth Circuit panel unanimously ruled against the parents. One judge had been appointed by Jimmy Carter, one by Bill Clinton, and one by Lyndon B. Johnson.

The decision claimed that the purpose of the psychological sex survey was “to improve students' ability to learn.” That doesn't pass the laugh test.

The Ninth Circuit decision stated that “there is no fundamental right of parents to be the exclusive provider of information regarding sexual matters to their children” and that “parents have no due process or privacy right to override the determinations of public schools as to the information to which their children will be exposed.”

The school had sent out a parental-consent letter, but it failed to reveal the intrusive questions about sex. The letter merely mentioned concerns about violence and verbal abuse, adding that if the child felt uncomfortable, the school would provide “a therapist for further psychological help.”

That should have been a warning, but many parents don’t realize that the schools have an agenda unrelated to reading, writing and arithmetic. Anticipating the new push to subject all schoolchildren to mental health screening, the decision gratuitously stated that the school’s power extends to “protecting the mental health of children.”

The court didn’t bother to defend the nosy questionnaire itself, and said that public school authority is not limited to curriculum. The court made no mention of the need for informed parental consent or a right to opt out of an activity the parents deem morally objectionable.

The Ninth Circuit agreed with the lower court’s broad ruling that the fundamental right to direct the upbringing and education of one’s children does not encompass the right “to control the upbringing of their children by introducing them to matters of and relating to sex in accordance with their personal and religious values and beliefs.”

How did the Ninth Circuit circumvent “the fundamental right of parents to make decisions concerning the care, custody, and control of their children,” which has been U.S. settled law for decades? The court referred to this as the Meyer-Pierce right because it was first explicitly enunciated in two famous Supreme Court cases of the 1920s, Meyer v. Nebraska and Pierce v. Society of Sisters, and was reaffirmed as recently as 2000 in Troxel v. Granville.

The Ninth Circuit court said that since the government has put limits on parents’ rights by requiring school attendance, therefore, the school can tell the students whatever it wants about sex, guns, the military, gay marriage, and the origins of life. The judges emphasized that once children are put in a public school, the parents’ “fundamental right to control the education of their children is, at the least, substantially diminished.”

How did the court feel empowered to put new limits on the settled law of Meyer-Pierce and give public schools the power to override parents on teaching about sex? Simple. The three liberal judges based their decision on “our evolving understanding of the nature of our Constitution.”

Liberal judges have no shame in proclaiming their belief that our written Constitution is “evolving.” In this case, the judges bragged that the Constitution has evolved to create the right to abortion, and then ruled that the evolving Constitution takes sex education away from parents and puts it “within the state’s authority as *parens patriae*.”

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Home Schooler Wins Math Prize

Agape Press, 12/6/2005

...A 16-year-old home school student from California has won top honors in a high school science contest, the Siemens Westinghouse Competition in Math, Science and Technology. According to Associated Press, Michael Viscardi of San Diego tackled a 19th-century math problem formulated by the mathematician Lejeune Dirichlet. The high school student’s new method of solving the “Dirichlet problem” is said to have potential engineering and physics applications, such as, for instance, in airplane wing design. For his prize, Viscardi receives a \$100,000 college scholarship, the largest individual award in the competition. The teenager, whose father is a software engineer and whose mother is a stay-at-home mom with a Ph.D. in neuroscience, says he has been home schooled since the fifth grade but also takes math classes at the University of California at San Diego three days a week. The lead judge in the Siemens Westinghouse Competition described young Viscardi as “a super-duper mathematics student” and noted that the judges found it “almost impossible” to determine the limits of his understanding during their questioning. [Fred Jackson and Jenni Parker]

Thanks to All Contributors!

Our thanks to our regular writers Sally Anne Perz and Wayne Walker for their articles. We also thank Donna Craig, Gerry Wright, and Carol McPeak for contributing math material reviews.

Hospitality: Lessons from the Amish

by Sally Anne Perz

Though progress in many forms is true to its definition - development or cumulative improvement - it is often learned too late that what is gained by progress may not be worth what is lost. One area that has become a "casualty" of progress is time. Time for sharing and building relationships has been lost in our society of scattered lives. Unfortunately, this is a problem not only faced by those of the world, but also by Christians and often even by home schooling families caught up in the rat race of modern life.

Why should we open our homes, especially to those of the household of God? Simply stated it is a command of God. We must follow God's commands in all areas; there is no valid excuse for a lack of hospitality. The scriptures clearly teach us to be hospitable: first to brethren, next to strangers (Galatians 6:10, I Peter 4:9, I Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:8, Matthew 25:34-40, Romans 12:13, Acts 2:46-47). Once one understands that hospitality is not optional, it is necessary to find a way to make it a part of his life.

A good example of hospitality is found in Amish life. One only has to read material written by the Amish to understand why they reject modern conveniences which we deem important. They reject the things they believe may cause their lives to become fragmented, things that may tear apart families, and things that may discourage constant association with families and friends. The Amish still pile in their buggies to go and visit one another. They make the time to sit, visit and become kindred spirits with one another. They share their lives in a meaningful way, not merely a handshake and a smile three times a week. Many who have been raised Amish, but never converted (thus not disfellowshipped) say that the single thing they missed the most when they left to live "in the world" was the peace that comes when there are no distractions such as the telephone, radio, or television.

What does Amish life have to do with Christian hospitality? Their fear of technology has come to pass, modern lives have become fragmented. Interestingly enough, those considered primitive by our society (the Amish and many third world countries) have not lost the art of hospitality. They have friends over for supper, to play games, or just to visit. It is a part of their life, and because they live ordered lives, it all fits together. Homes are neat and orderly, children are trained to pick up after themselves. What does this order accomplish? It gives them the time to associate with one another. They do not work to be finished, they work because it is worthy; one of their sayings is "Hands to work, hearts to God." When one has everything in order (a routine, a clean well-organized home, and obedient children), there is not a lot of time wasted running around. They are not overwhelmed with a messy home, a chaotic schedule, and unruly children.

Telephone and e-mail will never replace what is gained by sharing our lives with one another. We do not have to cut ourselves off from the world like the Amish to keep our lives from becoming fragmented. We can learn to say "No" to life on the run. A popular sticker says, "Why do they call me a homemaker when I'm always in the car?" This is sadder than it is funny. In order to "keep the home" and "show hospitality" you need to be at home. Home schooling often keeps families home, but so many times they make themselves so busy and do not make the time for company.

In addition to the lack of time, another excuse given is a messy house. The Bible has much to say about industry and order. There are many good books on de-cluttering, and even a 15-month-old child can learn that "everything has a place and that is where it goes when we are finished with it." No one has to live in a mess, one simply needs to take control and get organized. This is really the key to having the time and energy to entertain. Many women open their homes during all seasons of their lives: pregnancy, nursing babies, high maintenance toddlers, busy husbands, small homes, little money. None of these things are excuses for lack of hospitality. If opening your home is important to you, and it will be if following God's commands is a priority, you will find a way to do it.

Spending time with like minded Christians is a wonderful way to encourage and edified, it is also a wonderful way for the world to know us, "by our love for one another." Hospitality does not have to include a huge feast; it is simply opening our home to others, and offering what our 'talents' allow. When I was nursing an infant and simultaneously caring for our four active children, I always made sure that dinners for guests were simple. Often desserts can be prepared ahead of time. Crock pots and casseroles make easy meals. Helpful husbands can throw burgers on the grill while guests bring chips and salad. Small children can set the table and welcome guests, and many wonderful friends have been made while doing dishes after a get-together. Resolve yourself to become hospitable today!

A Review of The Complete Book of Math

by Donna Craig

Three years ago if you had asked me if I was “settled” on my math, I would have answered “yes.” Our family was working merrily through Horizons Math K through 2 and following up with Saxon 54 beginning in 4th grade. However, this past year, with two in the same grade, I did not want to spend the total of \$50 on math workbooks and thought I’d look for something more economical. I also wanted a little more leeway to do math at a more leisurely pace, stopping to spend a day on math games or play with manipulatives. And I didn’t want to spend money on workbooks that had pages and pages with rows and rows of math problems that my children didn’t need to do in order to master a new concept. Thus began a search through home-schooling catalogs and websites to look for a program that fit my new requirements. I found what I was looking for at my local Walmart.

The *Complete Book of Math* workbook series by McGraw-Hill retails for \$14.95, but at Walmart, each costs about \$10. The series has a workbook each for grade levels 1-2, 3-4, and 5-6. I am reviewing only the workbook for grades 1 and 2 since that is all we have used so far.

The workbook has a whopping 352 pages and has lessons on number recognition, counting (including counting by ordinals), comparing, classification, patterns, addition and subtraction (1 to 3-digit numbers), place value (through the hundreds), time (hours, half-hours, quarter-hours, and minutes), money (pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters, half-dollars), measurement (including some metrics), graphing, geometry (circles, squares, rectangles, ovals, diamonds, and some use of geoboards), and fractions (through the “fourths”).

The book is not just a collection of workbook pages. A suggested list of manipulatives is given following the table of contents. Many of these manipulatives can be found in your pantry or desk drawer. “Getting Started” pages offer suggestions on using these manipulatives to teach math concepts. These pages are placed in the book at the beginning of the sections on patterns, sorting and classifying, addition and subtraction, place value, two- and three-digit subtraction, and measurement. Other manipulatives are printed on pages throughout the workbook. These manipulatives include Unifix pattern cards, pattern attribute shapes and some pattern cards to accompany them, a Venn diagram, a “hundreds” chart, two place value charts (one for ones and tens, the other for ones, tens, and hundreds), a large clock face (you add the hands), a 7-inch ruler, and a 17-centimeter ruler. Directions are given for making a pan balance. Several games are provided, a nice break from doing workbook pages. Usually you need only tear out the page with the game board, provide pawns and commence playing.

As someone who is admittedly lazy and hates breaking out the manipulatives (and cleaning them up), this workbook has been a math-saver since there are so many pages that shouldn’t be done without first using the manipulatives or using the manipulatives while doing the problems. These pages allow children to learn new math concepts or have old ones reinforced by first using concrete objects, then transitioning to two dimensional drawings of objects, and in some cases moving on to problems that require them to “see” the problems in their heads. Studies show this is the best way for children to learn math.

My children loved the workbooks. One big reason is because they are so colorful. (They actually remarked on this.) Another reason is because of their approach to problem solving. One doesn’t just add $1+3$ to equal 4, one has 1 yummy ice cream cone and then has 3 more. Or Buddy the bear needs to get off the ground in his hot-air balloon by moving through clouds whose sums are 9. Word problems featured throughout the book also appealed to them since they were problems about items or activities that interest children their age. They also had opportunity to “create” some of their own problems, such as the time they went on a scavenger hunt through the house to find things to measure with the provided rulers (which they thought were “cool”).

There is no overload of problems on the pages. Some days there are 4 problems, some days there are more. Rarely, except at the ends of sections when mastery is expected, are there “row after row” of math problems.

Do I have any criticisms of this workbook? Just a few. First, there is very little use of the number line. I consider this important in understanding numbers, addition, and subtraction, and is one of the things that I loved about Horizons Math. But number line instruction is easy to add in. Second, the paper manipulatives may be nice to have, but they may not be sturdy enough for the more active little mathematician. However, I covered ours with clear Contact paper and they held up well enough. Third, the work-

book is arranged by subject instead of being “spiraled” as in the Horizons Math workbooks. I am not an expert in math, but after 15 years of homeschooling, I have seen that the spiral approach worked best with my children. However, the subject is 1st and 2nd grade math and I think parents can figure out how to spiral the math themselves. Last, sometimes the instructions that are given to the children are a bit wordy and simpler explanations are needed. Again, parents can probably provide the needed explanations after reading through the workbook pages.

There are no answer pages with the grades 1 and 2 workbook. (There are with grades 3 and 4.) I haven’t considered this much of a negative as there are usually so few problems per page and it is easy enough to glance at them while my daughters are doing their work to check their problems, and to offer additional instruction on a concept on the spot.

For those who would like to use this workbook, you might wish to purchase additional manipulatives, though the workbook does try to make this unnecessary. We already had several manipulatives and these are the ones that we used: number tiles for the more kinesthetic learner, disc counters (I would recommend overhead counters as they are transparent and they fit on the hundred chart), realistic “play” money, fraction circles or squares, and a number line. Additionally, the pages are perforated, so you may wish to purchase a notebook in which to place the pages and a zippered pencil bag to fit in the notebook for all the workbook’s manipulatives. I purchased my number line at Rainbow Resource Center. It’s a write-on/wipe-off line that uses special crayons. I also purchased a bucket balance at Rainbow Resource Center rather than making a pan balance. It’s more accurate plus with the addition of gram weights, you can use the balance for science activities.

I still consider Horizons Math an outstanding math curriculum for those early years, but if you feel you have a good handle on teaching those early math concepts, then you might want to give *The Complete Book of Math* a try. In addition to buying them directly from the publisher at www.MHKids.com (I think it will re-direct you to another site), or from Walmart, I have also seen these books at Books-a-Million and Waldenbooks and in the Rainbow Resource Center catalog.

Make It Your Ambition

Written by John Notgrass

Reviewed by Wayne Walker

For teenagers. \$15.00. Notgrass Company, TN. 1-800-211-8793; www.notgrass.com.

John Notgrass graduated from high school at home in 1997. He now works as a partner in his family’s publishing business and enjoys reading good books, making music, and maintaining an active interest in civic affairs. A featured speaker at homeschool conventions and support group meetings and a regular columnist for *Home School Digest*, John lives with his parents, four sisters, brother, and grandfather in Middle Tennessee. This book was written primarily for homeschooled students, especially young men, to encourage them to live for God’s glory, but it is suitable reading for all young people who want to please Christ in their lives. It would be my suggestion that parents and their teenage children sit down, read it together, and discuss the material.

Different chapters deal with making plans and preparations on how to honor parents, gain an education past high school, make a living, be different from the world in lifestyle, look for a suitable marriage partner, raise one’s own children, become involved in civic affairs, and serve God as a member of Christ’s body. I especially liked the chapter on “Why I Plan to Train My Children at Home.” Because people have different backgrounds, everyone may not find each specific suggestion useful. However, the author himself says, “I do not expect you to do everything the same way I do, but I do expect you to think about the issues, make conscious decisions, and live them out confidently.”

The passage of scripture upon which the book is based is, “Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; so that you may conduct yourself decently toward outsiders, and have need of nothing” (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12). This book does an excellent job of providing interesting information and advice that will help young people accomplish this aim in their lives. I especially appreciate the emphasis that the author places on using the scriptures as the absolute standard upon which we must make the choices and decisions that face us in life. John identifies himself as a member of the Church of Christ and says that he appreciates his “restoration heritage.”

Tell Your Friends about Family Times!