

FAMILY TIMES

A Home-school Newsletter for New Testament Christians
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See our web site for past issues of *Family Times* and reviews of home-school materials

March-May, 2006

HSLDA Discount Group

As a subscriber to *Family Times*, you are entitled to join our Home School Legal Defense Association discount group. Since HSLDA has recently made some changes, this is a good time to make sure our members understand what is involved.

Note that *Family Times* subscribers must keep their *Family Times* subscription current in order to continue to receive a discount from HSLDA. If you fail to renew, we must inform HSLDA, and you lose your discount!

What is a discount group?

For people not in a discount group, the annual fee for HSLDA membership is \$115 per year. But discount groups can offer exactly the same membership for \$95 per year. Group members receive exactly the same services from HSLDA, but at the lower cost. However, to receive the discount, members must join a group that offers the discount arrangement.

As a discount group member, you continue to receive annual billings for your membership dues. These billings come directly from HSLDA, and payments are made directly to HSLDA. However, you pay only the discounted rate.

Family Times has been accepted by HSLDA as a qualified discount group. However, HSLDA requires that all members of our discount group must be active subscribers to the *Family Times* newsletter.

How to enroll

If you are already a member of HSLDA, when you receive your next bill from HSLDA, you should pay them only the discounted membership fee. You must indicate on your HSLDA membership form that you are a member of the *Family Times* discount group (group #298288). (If they ask for an address, put 7846 St. Joe Road, Ft. Wayne, IN 46835; phone 847-395-8937.) Send your HSLDA membership form and check to HSLDA, not to us.

Note: If you are already a member of another discount group (such as a local support group), you are free to switch to our discount group. This is perfectly legitimate. As a *Family Times* subscriber, you may feel more comfortable encouraging a discount group consisting of Christians.

What if you are not now a member of HSLDA? If you want to join HSLDA and pay the discount rate, please obtain a membership application form from HSLDA, PO Box 3000, Purcellville, VA 20134. When you fill out the application form, include the information about our discount group where the form requests it (see the group #, etc., above). Attach a check made out to HSLDA (not to us) for the discount group rate. Then mail the form and the check to HSLDA.

Remember, after you join our group all billing is done directly from HSLDA to you, but you only pay the discounted fee. **BUT you must continue renewing your subscription to Family Times. If you allow your Family Times subscription to lapse and do not renew, we must remove you from the discount group too, and your HSLDA dues will increase to the undiscounted rate.**

Why join HSLDA?

If you are not a member of HSLDA, why should you join? HSLDA is *the* organization for the legal protection of home schoolers. It exists entirely for the purpose of protecting member families from legal harassment. In return for the annual membership fee, HSLDA agrees to provide membership families with whatever legal advice they need, plus lawyer representation if needed, and all legal costs in the event of a court suit over home schooling.

HSLDA has been the driving force in the movement to assure the legality of home schooling in this country. While home schoolers should give thanks to God for the freedom we have in this country, HSLDA is, in our opinion, the primary tool God has used to protect this freedom. They have repeatedly won major legislative and judicial battles for the good of home schoolers. And not one of their families has ever had to quit home schooling for legal reasons.

For many years we have encouraged all home schoolers to join HSLDA for the protection and peace of mind it provides. In addition, even if you never face any legal challenge, your membership dues will help provide for the legal protection of other home schoolers who do face such challenges. And believe me, if you ever have a legal confrontation yourself, you will be *glad* for your HSLDA membership.

If you want more information about HSLDA, contact them at HSLDA, PO Box 3000, Purcellville, VA 20134; Phone (540)338-5600. Or visit their WWW site <http://www.hsllda.org/>.

Teaching Literature the Maverick Way

by Katy Jones

Since I began writing for publication when my oldest son was 3 years old (20 years ago), both my sons have grown up seeing Mama write for fun and profit, and so our experiences with literature are probably different from the average home-schooling family. I vividly remember some of the horrible “literature” I was required to read in high school and college that gave me nightmares (including *The Lord of the Flies* and the short story, “The Lottery”), and I was determined that my children would be exposed to literature that uplifts the spirit and gives hope, even in terrible circumstances (such as *The Hiding Place* and *The Diary of Anne Frank*).

From the time they could sit up, my husband and I read picture books to the children, and then added longer and longer stories, even into their teens. There is something especially cozy about reading together as a family! We’ve used historical fiction corresponding to our history unit studies but also read some silly fiction too, just for fun! (One of our all-time favorites — Hank the Cowdog.)

My philosophy of literature is that prolific reading of well-written, wholesome books not only builds character, but the patterns of language are absorbed so that when the time comes to write, the child has a well of inspiration from which to draw. I don’t believe it’s necessary to “dissect” the writing to death, as many “literature” textbooks instruct. Once the students reach high school, that skill can be taught (but not with every book!) so that they are prepared for college English courses. In the meantime a love for good literature needs to be cultured; that fragile love can be squelched by too much emphasis on tearing apart the story to discuss characters, motivations, plot, theme, etc. An informal discussion works great to make sure your child understands these things and gives the reader a chance to digest the story by sharing the “good stuff” and working out the “confusing stuff.”

There are two ways to determine whether or not a book is appropriate reading for your child: read it first or consult a source you trust (such as *Honey for a Child’s Heart* or another parent’s recommendation). Being a fast reader, I almost always read the book first, but sometimes there aren’t enough hours in the day. Our family’s guideline is Philippians 4:8 — “Whatsoever things are true ... honest ... just ... pure ... lovely ... of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

I have heard of some people who use this verse to say that reading fiction is wrong (since it isn’t “true”). If that’s the case, then we’d best not read anything other than God’s Word, because even the most meticulously researched nonfiction will have errors in it, considering it was written by a fallible human being! A good fiction story can teach “truth” in the same way that the parables of Jesus illuminate us

today. Wholesome fiction can stimulate our children's God-given imagination, which will help them throughout their lives to approach problems and tasks with creative solutions and ideas.

Note: Many books have been made into movies. Our "rule of thumb" has been to read the novel first and then watch the movie. We have a lot of fun making comparisons and offering opinions as to which is better (usually the novel wins)!

Judge Says Intelligent Design Has No Place in Public Schools

Citizen Link Daily Update 12/20/05, by Wendy Cloyd, assistant editor

SUMMARY: Ruling says teachers should not disparage evolution.

U.S. District Court Judge John Jones ruled today that intelligent design has no place in public school science classes, calling it religion in disguise.

The landmark case, *Kitzmiller v. Dover School District*, was a test of whether the theory of intelligent design (ID) — the idea that some aspects of biology are too complicated to attribute to random chance — could even be mentioned as an alternative to the theory of evolution.

Jones concluded that letting public school students know about ID violated the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.

"We have concluded that ID cannot uncouple itself from its creationist, and thus religious, antecedents," Jones wrote in his decision. "To be sure, Darwin's theory of evolution is imperfect. However, the fact that a scientific theory cannot yet render an explanation on every point should not be used as a pretext to thrust an un-testable alternative hypothesis grounded in religion into the science classroom or to misrepresent well-established scientific propositions."

Tom Minnery, senior vice president of government and public policy at Focus on the Family Action, reacted to the ruling with dissatisfaction.

"Judge John Jones has become party to the charade presented by the American Civil Liberties Union in the *Kitzmiller* case by deciding that local school boards cannot inform students that the Darwinian theory is just that — a theory," he said. "Most unfortunately, this case underscores what was obvious from the beginning — that any theory challenging Darwinism is hysterically opposed by the left as an unconstitutional establishment of religion."

"Intelligent design is not a religious theory. The First Amendment is the true loser today," he added.

While Jones struck a blow to schools' ability to teach ID in science classes, he didn't stop there. He also denigrated the school board members who sought to provide students with the alternative.

"The citizens of the Dover area were poorly served by the members of the Board who voted for the ID Policy," he wrote. "It is ironic that several of these individuals, who so staunchly and proudly touted their religious convictions in public, would time and again lie to cover their tracks and disguise the real purpose behind the ID Policy."

David Napierskie, who was recently voted off the Dover School Board, said it is clear that simply having a religious background is enough to encourage some judges to dismiss testimony as tainted.

"It's a sad statement with regard to academic freedom," he said. "My question to the ACLU is when are they going to attack the Constitution of the United States and say that it is wrong because the Founding Fathers were all religious? Are they going to say, just because they were religious in nature, that the Constitution itself must be somehow biased?"

"It is the same thing with the intelligent-design issue," he said. "The debate over the (school board science curriculum) statements had nothing with regards to religion. At the end of the day, those four paragraphs had nothing religious in them at all."

Casey Luskin, program officer for public policy and legal affairs at the Discovery Institute's Center for Science & Culture, said the case denies the free speech rights of teachers, who now cannot present the science of ID.

"A legal ruling cannot change the fact that there is digital code in our DNA and it can't remove molecular machines from the cell," he said. "So you can't change the facts of biology by a legal decree and the cell remains strong evidence of intelligent design."

Not only did the judge overreach, he said, but his decision is unconstitutional.

"The judge actually says something incredible. He says that evolution and religion should not conflict," Luskin said. "And that may be true. It is perfectly fine if people want to believe that God used evolution to create. But the government and the court have no business reaching their hands in and telling religious people what should and should not conflict with their religious belief."

[Editorial note: Evolution, of course, does irrevocably contradict *true* religion. Nevertheless, the article is correct that the government has no right telling people what they should believe religiously.]

Correspondence High School

Suze Tolbert

We decided to do a *basic education* through a correspondence high school course for our oldest son, Joshua. We have liked it enough to do again with our second son, Caleb.

We chose www.educationdirect.com. The cost has gone up a fair amount and is at \$1000 for the 3-4 year program now. As of December 19, 2005, Thomson/Education Direct will be called Penn Foster High School. The website is www.pennfosterhighschool.com and you can get more information at www.in-fopennfoster.com phone number 1-888-427-1000. All information is supposed to stay the same, just a new name.

I will re-state, this is a *basic education*. Your child will get all he needs to graduate high school and enter college. We added to this program because I felt Joshua needed more to do. ☺ It did give him time to pursue other things while in high school. He works 2 days a week, during the day; he takes Greek with a Christian 1-2 days a week; and he has been involved for 3 years with Brookfield Zoo and their youth program, 3-4 days a month this year. (Other years he's had to do more days.) We also belong to a home-school bowling league on Mondays. I state all of this to show you the possibilities of a basic education.

The program is designed to be completed in 3 years. I believe you can stretch it to 3½ years without additional cost. I have believed from the first that 3 years is sufficient for high school. If you are the type to study, then begin college. If you aren't, then begin an apprenticeship. Joel and I made this decision before having children and still feel this way. Joshua is taking Speech 101 at our local junior college this semester and doing fine.

I also liked this program because it is flexible. They send you one subject at a time. You take your tests online and get your results immediately. I called and had them send two more subjects, so he always had 3-4 subjects to work on at a time. Sometimes he did an entire subject then went to the next. But some subjects took longer and needed to be done simultaneously, such as computers. This course took about an hour. It's meant to be simple and it's just to see if you will be able to read the book and take your tests online. It's not too much about computers. Earth Science or Biology both took a few months to complete and he did other easier subjects along with these. The program is set up to send the next subject when you take half the tests of the subject you are working on. Once we had 4 subjects at home, he worked on the first subject and when he got to the halfway test the next subject was sent. If at any time you want more, just call and they will send them. You can get the entire program at once, but I do not recommend this. It will be overwhelming, things could get misplaced, and it's a lot of books to keep up with. You can go online on your account and can see the order of the subjects. They get considerably harder toward your last year and take longer to complete.

As you read through the books they have self-checks with the answers in the back of the book. Be sure your kids do these, as it will help them actually learn a bit of what they are studying. The final test is in the back of each book. You can have them take it as an open book test. This is not as easy as you might think. Many of the questions you must formulate an answer for. It's not just fill-in-the-blank word-for-word out of the book. If you fail a test they tell you what page the answer is found on and you can retake the test the next day. The most you can get is a 70 on a retake.

You will pick 5 electives at the end. There are about 20 choices. Joshua chose: Algebra I, Chemistry, Electrician, Electronics, and Drafting. He had already done Algebra I through a video program and part of Saxon Algebra I, but I wanted him to get credit on his high school transcript. He also did Durrell Dobbins' science program, but once again I wanted it on his transcript. Your electives can give them a taste of something they wouldn't otherwise get to try. The last 3 he chose have very cool things with them. For example, Electronics has a digital multimeter, that he will use again in his life and Drafting has 2 bags of tools to draw and measure with. I actually knew this ahead and this is partly why we chose them. I chose the first 2 and Joshua chose the last 3.

Lastly, you can have up to 3 people say you referred them and you get \$50 back from each person! I can use this for Caleb since his brother is taking the program now and Caleb will start this summer. So if 2 of you decide to do this program, please use my name as referral!! ☺

Hopefully, this helped you if you are looking for a high school program that is not overwhelming. I believe it was right for Joshua and he has enjoyed being able to pursue other things without being over-taxed and stressed.

Joshua is set to graduate this May, 2006. He will be 17 June 1. He plans to work and go to school at the junior college this next year, then transfer to a university.

If you have further questions that I can help with, feel free to contact me.

Snapshot Reviews Of Reading Programs

Collected by Wayne S. Walker

First, thanks to those of you who took the time to write some snapshot reviews about phonics programs that you have used and found beneficial. I appreciate your interest and effort. The results were published in the June-August, 2005, issue of *Family Times*, so if you received *Family Times* then, you have already seen them. Now that we have taught our children **how** to read, I wanted some snapshot reviews of reading programs, especially for grades 1-4, but including all the elementary school years up through the eighth grade.

Wayne Walker:

The core of our reading program for grades 1-4 has been the McGuffey Readers — the original ones republished by Mott Media, not the watered-down revised edition that removes much of the Biblical worldview and is currently available in most standard bookstores — along with the Reading Series workbooks also published by Mott Media that are coordinated with them. We like the McGuffey Readers because of their unabashedly Biblical worldview, and the workbooks are very useful in providing exercises in reviewing sounds, vocabulary building, spelling, and other aspects of language arts studies — plus it gives you pretty much of a daily planning guide for how to use the readers. We supplemented this with a lot of other reading materials — some public school reading books that I had when I was a child (I went to grammar school in the early 1960's using books from earlier days so they are much better than much of what is used today) or were given to me by my parents and grandparents, and real books such as *Step into Reading*, *Hello Readers*, *I Can Read Books*, *All Aboard Readers*, *Alphapets*, and others.

The Mott Media workbooks cease after grade 4, but we have continued to use the McGuffey Readers for spelling, vocabulary, and writing exercises while placing more emphasis on reading living books. In fifth grade, Mark read through the “Little House” books by Laura Ingalls Wilder; in sixth grade, the “Chronicles of Narnia” books by C. S. Lewis; in seventh grade, the “Anne Shirley” books by Lucy M. Montgomery; and in eighth grade, the “Prydain Chronicles” by Lloyd Alexander, along with a few others thrown in (“The Secret Garden” and “The Little Princess” by Frances H. Burnett; “The Cricket in Times Square” and “Chester Cricket’s Pigeon Ride” by George Selden; and the three young people’s books by E. B. White). With some of these we used Progeny Press and Total Language Plus literature study guides. While getting them to take the time from other activities (baseball, volleyball, video games, etc.) to start a book has sometimes been a task, both of our boys are good readers and enjoy reading.

Denise Wilson: Pathway Readers.

I have been using these over the past year and a half with great pleasure (1st-3rd grade levels). The first two years (I believe) are filled with stories about a family and their four children. My daughter loved to read about them and their everyday life. These are Amish books, so the families involved and lifestyle presented is Amish, but at the same time, it is not a focus or distraction. Some terms familiar to farms and that style (manger, buggy, etc) are included as well. By, I believe, the 3rd grade books (New Friends and More New Friends), the focus switches to different families and friends. The books are cloth bound and very simple. Various illustrations are throughout. The reading is simple and in nice, manageable size chunks of time. What I most enjoy about them from a teaching standpoint is the workbooks. For grades 2 and 3 (1st is a blur), there are typically three pages per story. The first page introduces new words and reviews skills previously taught. The second page is generally a phonetic lesson. The last page is typically a comprehension page about the story they read. My daughter found the phonetic page to be the most challenging. They teach the phonetic symbols typically found in dictionaries. Although this was difficult for her, it is introduced gradually and I feel it will pay off for her later. I never learned them, so seeing the pronunciation spelling in the dictionary didn't do me any good.

I can't speak about the rest of the series, but we will certainly be sticking with this program. I have been using it at an accelerated pace with my daughter with no problems. The stories are worry free and

tend to have good moral lessons intertwined that would be good for children to have planted in them (honesty, hard work, keeping your word, etc). I have been very pleased thus far.

Diana Dow:

We've used McGuffey Readers (from Mott Media). I like the fact that my kids are learning using the same readers (with a small amount of changes) that their great grandparents probably used. There are 4 readers. The numbers on the readers do not correspond with the grade level of the child. I would roughly estimate that the First Reader should be used with 1-3 grade, the Second Reader with 3-5 grade, the Third Reader with 5-7 grade and the Fourth Reader with 7-9.

When my children are reading fairly independently, I start them in the First Reader. They read one section aloud each day. My goal is to have each child work through all 4 readers. That hasn't happened, but they all read most of them.

Each reading has to do with a science subject, history subject, good manners, good morals, or the Bible. You can purchase Ruth Beechick's Parent Guide. She encourages you to use the readers for your Language Arts study. I tried that for a while, but found that I wanted a little more direction in that subject. But, if you are so inclined, it would be great.

The complete set includes a speller, primer and a pictorial primer. I haven't found these as useful as the readers themselves. Mott Media publishes these in hard back. They look just like the books you see in museums. My kids have seen them in a one-room school setting of a museum and say, "Hey, that's the book we use." Just a side note, we sell these books on our website. (The Dow's Schoolroom, www.thedowsschoolroom.com).

Melanie Gougar:

We used Fasttrack for our oldest. We were new, and it was cheaper than Hooked on Phonics. Britany did fine with it, and I liked it. I used Hooked on Phonics with my other three because the set was given to us. I liked it better because it is so repetitive. I believe my younger three can pronounce words phonetically better than my oldest because of this.

Barb Holloway:

We used Bob Jones. I thought the stories were quality stories. I also liked the consumable workbooks that went with them. They include a variety of activities, using vocabulary, writing, map reading, etc. We always enjoyed their books.

Nanette Campbell:

I have a 2nd grader and a 1st grader. When my son was starting kindergarten I used a program called Action Reading Fundamentals, developed and taught by Jeanie Eller, M.A. He did very well with it and was reading by the end of kindergarten - well enough, I didn't have to help him much when we started 1st grade with giving instructions on school worksheets. My daughter, however, was not as ready to start reading. I had started the program but she did not progress as fast as my son and we ended the year with still trying to blend sounds. I have seen a maturing in her over the summer and she just turned 6 so I anticipate things to move on as this year progresses.

I was very pleased with Action Reading and I feel it was worth the investment but I have chosen to go with Alpha-Omega, Horizons Phonics and Reading, Kindergarten, for my 1st grader. With Action Reading you move at your own pace and if you have to spend more time on something you can without pressure to finish the program at a certain time. However, I felt at a loss when I needed additional support of some kind for my daughter. Horizons is suppose to be between Kindergarten and first grade; so far it has been doing well. I intend to use the Action Reading to supplement but I did not feel comfortable continuing with it alone. I needed something to help me start with where she was and also know she is moving forward. I feel more comfortable with purchasing a ready-made curriculum than me trying to come up with something. I held off purchasing any new material till I tried using the old and could tell she still needed something to get over the hurdles of blending. She needed a different approach to blending than what I had. I have been impressed with the Horizons curriculum so far. I am using Bob Jones Reading curriculum (1st grade) for my son which I started more than half way (Feb.) through the year last year, he did not have confidence in his abilities. I felt it would help him gain that confidence, instead of going ahead and starting him on the 2nd-grade material.

What I like about both Action Reading and Horizons is they are fairly self-contained. In Action Reading you have cards that you laminate and cut to use (I copied them and then laminated them), games to

play, and songs to learn the different fundamentals. It also has a workbook and cassette tapes that Jeanie (herself) teaches the material and the children listen to each lesson. I don't find that Horizons has the other activities but does have characters and a little story for each letter. Bob Jones curriculum is okay. It has forced my son to do more silent reading which I feel has helped his confidence, but the teacher's manual has way too much instruction detail. It goes off on tangents about other subjects and information, which is interesting but not necessary for learning phonics and reading. I find it way too time-consuming to try to follow the manual and instead just try to hit the necessary info that is helpful to my son. I try to keep in mind it is most probably dealing with students that do not read yet, and my son does; but it is helping reinforce the things he learned in Action Reading. BJP also has songs to go with it but I did not purchase that part of the curriculum.

Sally Anne Perz:

Of all of the things we have done with our home education, I count our reading instruction to be the most successful — our four oldest children are prolific readers and our youngest child (5 years old) reads aloud to me each day from simple books. I love to read and I wanted to raise all five of our children to love to read! The best part of our reading “curriculum” is how easy it was to use.

It was important for me to have something simple and non-consumable. I chose Teach Your Child to Read in 100 Easy Lessons. After completing that, I used Samuel Blumenfield's book, Alphaphonics. These two books cost me a total of \$40 — the best deal I have ever found. We dedicated Kindergarten to learning to read. I simply spent time with the child each day sitting together going through the lessons. We did not use any “bells or whistles” — no flash cards, songs, or other devices. If they needed an explanation, I supplied it. If we came across an unfamiliar word, I defined it. We chatted about the words and noted rhymes and other interesting things.

Once we finished the two books (this took about twenty minutes or so per day for several months), they read aloud simple books to me (a variety of easy readers). By the age of 6, the oldest four were reading novels on their own (I choose all of the books that enter our home). I always encouraged them to talk to me about their books, so I could be sure they understood them. I also continued to have them read aloud from time to time to be certain that their pronunciation was correct. We read aloud together as a family daily and the children and I read aloud together several times a day. We did not do any other structured reading program. I simply supplied good books and they read. This alone has taught them comprehension, spelling, vocabulary, basic grammar, and many other things. One thing I have done since they began to read is to keep extensive lists of every novel they read. We really enjoy referencing these, and I never regret the time spent keeping up with them. I don't know if our success is due to the two books or if my love of reading simply “wore off” on them. Either way, reading is a favorite activity for all five of them, as it has always been for me!

Research Indicates Adverse Effects of Daycare, Preschool

AS DATA EMERGES, HOME-SCHOOL ADVOCATE HOPES STATE OFFICIALS TAKE HEED

By Jim Brown, November 14, 2005 (AgapePress)

Two new studies indicate parents might want to reconsider sending their children to daycare or preschool. In one study, Stanford University and University of California researchers found that children who spend more than six hours a day in center-based care outside the home showed poor social skills.

According to the researchers, the children in the investigation showed “diminished levels of cooperation, sharing, motivated engagement in classroom tasks, and greater aggression.”

And in another study, this one conducted by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, a researcher found that kids who spent long hours in daycare and preschool exhibited “poorer work habits and poorer social skills through third grade.” These children, according to the study, tended more than others to have trouble concentrating and completing their school work.

Denise Kanter with the California-based “Considering Homeschooling Ministry” believes these research findings make a good case for mothers to stay at home with their children. In the average preschool or day-care situation, she contends, “You're actually putting young children — two, three, four, five and on up — with children their own age, and they all come from different kinds of backgrounds; and there's a lot of bullying and violence and mistreatment that's happening among the children.”

It is hard to see how young children “can even survive that situation,” Kanter observes, “so it's not surprising to me that they're emotionally and socially not doing well.” She says U.S. states considering

universal preschool as an educational option may want to think twice about adopting such programs, especially in light of these new studies.

This latest research should raise red flags for those states seeking more funding for early education programs, the home education advocate asserts. “You have all these governors and these states pushing universal preschool, but what they’re pushing is something that is not going to be of benefit to the children,” she says.

Kanter feels the Stanford-UC and National Institute studies confirm what she has long maintained — that children are better off when raised at home by their mothers. “I’m hoping these states will take a second look at universal preschool and realize it’s not the optimum way to raise children,” she says.

Jim Brown, a regular contributor to AgapePress, is a reporter for American Family Radio News, which can be heard online. © 2005 AgapePress all rights reserved.

Notgrass World History?

Reviewed by Melanie Bingham

We have used and are using the Notgrass History American History, and we like it very much. I’m excited to hear they have World History! I found the Notgrass family at a curriculum fair several years ago when we were living in TN. They had a booth near us when we were selling Usborne, and we were able to chat quite a bit. Their children (teenagers working with them) were great!

What drew us to their material was the emphasis on reading great works that fit into the particular period of history. We bought the American History program (I think all their stuff is for high school – or at least it was then). You could do it over a one or two-year period, depending on how you scheduled it. In typical Bingham style, we were rushing and squeezed it into one year. Two of my high schoolers have used this, and they both liked it very much. They read famous speeches and documents, works of period fiction, the Bible, biographies. He has them write a lot, so I’ve let it count for part of their English, too.

You buy the guidebook, and the author has written a few pages for the student to read in that guidebook each day, and then he gives them additional reading and writing assignments. It’s laid out in “units.” Benjamin is doing one unit per week. The questions and “thought” assignments are thought-provoking and well done. I am impressed with his Bible readings and how he chooses things for them to read and consider in light of the historical movement or person. I highly recommend it. I also thought the program was very reasonably priced. Even on Mr. Notgrass’s reading lists he recommends Dover publications (those great \$1.00 versions of books!) anytime he can.

Oh, and Benjamin is doing this very much on his own, in case you’re wondering how much work it is for Mom (also in typical Bingham-style – ha). I just check in and read some of his writing. He’s enjoying it.

REMINDER OF FAMILY TIMES CHANGES

We want to remind all subscribers of the changes announced in the Dec., 2005, *Family Times*.

(1) You can now access without charge past issues of *Family Times* on our web site. You must use the access code shown in the *Family Times* heading. This is the same code that you use to access our online reviews. See our heading for the web site address and for the access code.

(2) Effective following the June, 2006, issue of *Family Times*, all subscriptions will be sent by email. Regular mail subs will be eliminated. If you have a regular mail subscription that continues past June, you will automatically be changed to email and the length of your subscription adjusted proportionately.

If you do not wish to continue your email subscription, please notify us so we can send you a refund. If you do wish to continue to be subscribed by email, please be sure we have your current email address.

All email subscribers must be sure we have your current email address; otherwise you may cease receiving *Family Times* despite having paid your fee!

Our thanks again to all who contributed to this issue of *Family Times*: Suze Tolbert, Katy Jones, Melanie Bingham, Wayne Walker, and all who submitted reading reviews.