

FAMILY TIMES

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March – May, 2007

Homeschooling Methods in a Nutshell

by Sally Anne Perz

[Editor's note: The following information summarizes various different approaches to homeschooling. Included are links to web sites appropriate for each of the methods discussed.]

School-at-Home (Workbooks & Textbooks)

This is similar to the instruction one might receive in a government school or a private school. There are many pre-packaged materials that make this method attractive and easy to use, particularly for parents who want something that does not require a lot of teacher-student interaction. Publishers such as Rod and Staff, ABeka, Alpha Omega, Bob Jones and others sell textbooks, workbooks, and computer or DVD programs for pre-school to high school. Many like this method because it requires little daily time commitment from the teacher, little pre-planning, and clear grade divisions for subject matter. Unlike other methods, the scope and sequences are clear enough to be certain that the child is learning at his "grade level." Everything is generally laid out by the publisher for the teacher as well as the student. These programs have some non-consumable material, but much of the material is consumable and needs to be purchased for each student. Though it depends on the publisher and materials chosen, this can be an expensive route to choose. Most of these are "religious" in nature.

<http://www.abeka.com/>

<http://www.aop.com/home/>

<http://www.bjupress.com/services/bjhomesat/>

<http://www.rodandstaff.info/>

Charlotte Mason

This is perhaps the only method named after an individual. It is based on the works of Charlotte Mason (1842-1923), using her ideas as a guide to schooling at home and making learning a "delight." This approach is best known for using "living books" (as opposed to the use of textbooks and simplified books which Charlotte referred to as "twaddle"). To fully understand Mason's method, one must read her works, not simply the books written about her works (of which there are many). Mason is well known for encouraging narration (recitation of learned material). This is one of many "learning is a lifestyle" approaches, but is certainly not solely child led. Reading good literature is foundational to the Mason approach. This method requires varying

levels of teacher-student interaction and pre-planning on the teacher's part. Depending on how one approaches this method, cost will vary. Purchasing a library of books and materials will make this expensive. Using the public library and Mason's books alone would be rather economical.

<http://www.amblesideonline.org/CM/toc.html>

<http://www.charlottesmason.com/>

<http://www.infed.org/thinkers/et-mason.htm>

Classical

This is perhaps the oldest method of schooling. Though it is not child-led, it is geared toward teaching children to learn for themselves. As is obvious from its name, it is derived from the learning popular in ancient times. In its most pure form, it is perhaps the most rigorous and structured of all learning methods. Learning is divided into stages and is quite structured at each stage, increasing with age. The use of quality literature is foundational, and much emphasis is placed on reading classic literature and other quality literature. Writing, memorization, and recitation in abundance are all an expected part of learning. Recently made popular with contemporary homeschoolers by Susan Wise Bauer's book, *The Well Trained Mind*, this method has seen a greater following over the past few years. Classical learning requires time and effort on the part of the teacher, as the teacher is expected to discuss the material with the student. There are various publishers that offer materials supplementing classical learning: Veritas Press is probably the most popular. Like other methods, the cost will be determined by library use as opposed to purchasing books, and the use of non-consumable materials. Jessie Wise and Susan Wise Bauer, Harvie and Laurie Bluedorn and Douglas Wilson all write various articles and books explaining classical learning.

<http://www.veritaspress.com/store/home.asp>

<http://www.welltrainedmind.com/newsletter.php>

<http://www.classical-homeschooling.org/contents.html>

Unit Studies

This method integrates all subjects into one theme or topic. The child studies one topic and covers all desired subjects by looking at them all as they relate to that topic. Proponents of this style of learning believe that this is more effective than studying each subject separately. They also believe that this method is easier to use when students of various grade levels learn together. This method often encourages "hands-on-learning" in place of deskwork. Like other methods, this method encourages using a variety of books, as opposed to workbooks or textbooks. Often unit studies incorporate character studies and religious studies along with academic subjects. These studies can be used to develop an entire curriculum or can be used to supplement other methods of learning. Depending on which route the teacher takes, this method can require quite a bit of preparation, particularly if the teacher is designing the unit studies. However, there are many individual publishers that sell unit studies. KONOS and Weaver sell full service unit study packages.

http://www.konos.com/menus/konos_explained.htm

<http://www.agdistribution.com/CurriculumPublishers/AlphaOmegaPublications/Weaver-Curriculum.htm>

<http://amandabennett.com/>

<http://homeschoolunitstudies.com/Resources/history1middle.htm>

Eclectic

This is simply a term used to describe those who design their own unique method or philosophy, often using favorite philosophies or ideas from other methods. It describes those who use a variety of approaches, usually picking and choosing what works best for their family after examining the well-known methods. This can incorporate a mixture of several methods or just one

or two. It can also incorporate a mixture of well-known methods and “home-made” methods. The possibilities are endless. This method is popular because it allows teachers to take what is attractive to them about various methods and put them together to form their own unique method. One may take a classical approach to certain subjects and another approach for other subjects. Depending on what direction the teacher takes, this can be quite expensive, or quite economical. It is really a “do it yourself” manner of schooling and can be as difficult or as simple as the teacher makes it.

<http://eclectichomeschool.org/>

<http://hometown.aol.com/clayvessel/>

Unschooling

This is a term used to describe child-led learning. This is a way of schooling in which the parent provides a learning atmosphere: books, materials, varied levels of instruction, and assumes a desire to learn on the child’s part. This is obviously done on a variety of levels, sometimes only throughout elementary years with structured learning coming later. However, most unschooling “purists” do little but guide their children, even throughout the high school years. They believe that children have an innate desire to learn and will flourish in an appropriate atmosphere. They often take part in extracurricular activities (fine arts, sports, etc) just as other homeschoolers, yet do not encourage structured learning such as following scope and sequences or focusing on grade levels and testing. Unschooling is often given bad publicity because it seems that not much learning takes place. However, many unschoolers have been quite successful. Like other methods, the outcome depends on how much learning is actually done by the child. This is definitely a ‘learning is a lifestyle’ method, and does not rely on much pre-planning. The cost is fully dependent on what the parent spends to provide the ‘learning atmosphere’ and to fund any extracurricular activities that may be used. John Holt called it, “growing without schooling.”

<http://www.holtgws.com/johnholtpage.html>

<http://www.unschooling.com/>

<http://sandraddodd.com/unschooling>

<http://www.unschooling.org/>

There are other methods of home schooling, but these are the most well-known. Philosophies and methods are up to individual families and should be respected by others. Though we may choose to use different tools to learn, and different methods to teach, most home educators want to see their children excel academically. There is simply no one method that fits every family best. It is a wonderful blessing to have the freedom to homeschool, but even more of a blessing to be able to do it however it suits us best!

Motion Picture Production Code

(Adopted 1930)

“The sanctity of the institution of marriage and the home shall be upheld. No film shall infer that casual or promiscuous sex relationships are the common thing ... These [seduction and rape] should never be more than suggested, and then only when essential to the plot. They should never be shown explicitly ... Crime shall never be presented in such a way as to throw sympathy with the crime ... Brutal killings are not to be presented in detail ... Revenge, in modern times, shall not be justified ... Mercy killing shall never be made to seem right or permissible ... Dances suggesting or representing sexual actions or emphasizing indecent movements are to be regarded as obscene ... Laws - divine, natural or human - shall not be ridiculed.”

Cited on Biblelist by Kent Heaton

[Editor’s note: Obviously even the old movies found ways to avoid these guidelines. But contrast this to movies today! And I wonder why they found it necessary to mention dancing, since even some members of the church today want to defend dancing! – Dave Pratte]

The Problem with Home-based Charter Schools

June 26, 2002

HSLDA's Position in the Charter School Debate

Charter schools are a new phenomenon rapidly gaining popularity across the country. All charter schools are created or “chartered” by public school boards, which establish a mission, educational program, and methods of assessment. Most charter schools are classroom based. However, some charter schools are home based. When parents enroll their child in a full-time, classroom-based charter school, it is obvious that they are signing away much of their parental right to direct their child’s education. Home-based charter schools gloss over this surrender by giving parents a wide variety of “free” benefits, all for use at home: computer and Internet access, books, school supplies, support from certified teachers, and a diploma, etc.

Creates a little public school in your home

In reality, parents who accept government money through home-based charter schools are still signing over ultimate educational control of their children to the state. Enrolling in a home-based charter school creates a little public school in your home.

This is why HSLDA has for years opposed public school Independent Study Programs in California, and it’s why we oppose home-based charter schools.

One of HSLDA’s primary objectives is to establish the right of parents to independently teach their children at home free from government intervention. This is independent private home schooling. When HSLDA began in 1983, this was the only kind of home schooling that existed. In many states, home schooling was illegal. The same education establishment that fought home schooling years ago is beginning to see benefits of home-based charter schools. Is that because they are beginning to see the benefits of home schooling? The answer is a resounding “No!”

More profit for public schools

The issue is money and control. All public schools, including home-based charter schools, are funded based on attendance. The higher the student enrollment, the more money that is received. When a home schooler enrolls in a home-based charter school program, that school usually receives the same amount of funds for the student as if the child were attending the local public school. The difference is that the home-based charter school does not have to provide teachers, classrooms, and all the other related expenses of an on-site program.

Limits parental freedom & brings regulation

The state must hold recipients of taxpayer dollars accountable for how they use the funds. The flip side of the “free benefits” coin is not Lady Liberty—it’s a door to increased “accountability checks”: certified teacher oversight, curriculum approval, mandatory testing, and sometimes even home inspections. Ultimately, as these requirements grow, they will squelch one of the greatest benefits to home education—flexibility to accommodate each child’s learning style and interest.

Rather than more control, HSLDA believes there should be less control and interference with parents’ rights to direct the education of their children. Nationally normed standardized test results indicate that home schooled students score on average 30 percentile points above the national average. Private home schoolers have demonstrated that state funding and regulation are not necessary to achieve academic excellence.

Restricts religious freedom

Some 30 states already prohibit public schools and public school-funded programs from using sectarian materials. Because home-based charter schools are tax-funded, parents cannot use

Christian or other religious curriculum, nor will the home-based charter school give their children credit for religious courses/materials.

The big picture - the effect of government money on private education

America's Founding Fathers wrote the Constitution to keep the state checked by the law in order to keep the private sphere truly free. When individuals accept state funds for private activities, the distinction between the state and the private sphere is blurred, self-government is weakened, and the state is further unleashed from the bounds of law to intrude upon the personal lives of its citizens. If the distinction between the state and the private sphere is damaged or falls, our whole constitutional system of government collapses.

Conclusion

HSLDA encourages every home schooling family to be informed — know your U.S. and state constitutional rights, read your state home schooling law, and consider carefully the implications of a decision to enroll in a home-based charter school.

Teaching Music in the Homeschool

by Wayne S. Walker

(Originally published in Biblical Homeschooling, 9/2006.)

We have all heard that the three foundation subjects for a good education are “reading, writing, and arithmetic.” Here in Missouri, the regulations that govern homeschooling require that parents provide 1000 hours per year of instruction, with 600 of those in the core subjects of reading, language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science (or academic subjects related to these). The other 400 hours could include more of these or various electives such as art, music, foreign language, etc. In Ohio, the law required that 900 hours of instruction be given and specified that within these 900 hours, the following subjects should be included: language, reading, spelling, and writing; geography, history of the United States and Ohio, and national, state, and local government; mathematics; science; health; physical education; fine arts, “including music;” and first aid, safety, and fire prevention. Concerning the music, there are no requirements as to how, when, and where the music instruction is to be done or exactly what it is to include.

As we consider the general difference between “core” and “elective” subjects, music always seems to get put in the “elective” category. However, I believe that every homeschool should include musical instruction. There are two reasons for this. First, music is an important part of our Western Cultural Heritage. For all students, a general knowledge of our musical history helps us to understand better the background of our society. Second, music is an important part of our relationship with God. “Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:19). “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Colossians 3:16). For Christians, the more we know about the fundamentals of music, the better we can use it to praise our God.

I grew up in a musical home. My grandparents loved music. It was said that my grandfather had played trombone in high school. My mother played trumpet in high school, and her three sisters played other instruments. All four of them took piano lessons. I myself began taking piano lessons when I was six (a well known piano teacher lived just down the road from our house, so it was very convenient) and continued even into college. In grade school I began playing the trumpet (since my mother already had one), switched to baritone in seventh grade, and then switched to tuba (sousaphone) in eighth grade and was the only eighth grader in the high school

band that year. I continued to play tuba throughout high school and, again, into college. Also, I was in the high school chorus for four years.

When I was in grade school, we had weekly music classes. The teacher for the first three years was Sarah Chapman, a good friend and colleague of my grandmother's in the county school system. In grades four and five, Doris Garrison was our weekly music teacher and she had a way of making music really fun. George Miller, the high school band director, was the music teacher during my sixth-grade year, and he continued as my band director (and good friend) through junior high to my ninth grade when he retired. When I was in junior high, there were no music classes, other than band, but some weekly music classes for seventh and eighth grades were begun after I was in high school. Also, when I was in high school, there were no music classes besides band and chorus until my senior year, and that year my schedule was too full to include it, so again I missed out.

With all this musical background, it was natural that I started leading singing in my home congregation when I became a teenager, and was often asked to lead singing in other congregations when we visited during gospel meetings. I took a couple of elective music courses at Florida College, and liked them so much that at the University of Akron I switched my major to music, taking theory, composition, and music literature. Also, as I was growing up, we listened to a lot of music. My grandfather's tastes were rather eclectic; he liked true folk music, polkas, old time parlor songs, and classical music (I still have some of his classical LP's—just nothing available on which to play them any more!). My mother preferred pop standards. My father listened to country and western music. My brother was into rock and roll. I came out of all that with classical music as my favorite.

One does not have to be a music expert to include musical instruction in a homeschool curriculum. Dr. Mary Ann Froehlich has written an excellent book *Music Education in the Home: How to Nurture the Musician in Your Child*, and Patrick Cavanaugh has a similar book *Raising Musical Kids: Great Ideas to Help Your Child Develop a Love for Music*. These can be a bit overwhelming at times, leaving the impression that if your children do not turn out like Mozart maybe you need to be trying harder, but aside from that both of them have some excellent suggestions for average families. There are many ways to include music in homeschooling. Of course, private music lessons (piano, instrumental, or vocal) are a good option for those so inclined.

Most full-service homeschool curriculum providers have some kind of music instruction included. I checked catalogues for Bob Jones University Press, Accelerated Christian Education, and A Beka. Each of them has offerings under music, but they seemed spotty at best, and for those of us in churches of Christ who do not use instrumental music in worship or praising God, many of these have elements which we would find objectionable. My pick for elementary music curriculum is Rod and Staff, which has a music series that goes through eighth grade. Since it comes from conservative Mennonites who also do not use instrumental music in their worship, the emphasis is upon learning the fundamentals of music (including the shaped notes that appear in almost all of our hymnbooks) for use in singing, rather than playing, praise to God. Also, Usborne has some good books about music for young children. Other resources for music study can be found in various homeschooling catalogues.

One way for Christians to include some music in their homeschool curriculum is through the study of hymns. From the theory side, R. J. Stevens has put together a book *Rudiments of Sight Singing and Song Directing* (available from www.truthmagazine.com), which includes material that he and others use in singing schools and song leader training classes. It would be especially helpful in helping young men to develop their abilities in leading singing. From the history side, many books that examine the background of various hymns have been written, such as those by Kenneth Osbeck (*101 Hymn Stories* and *101 More Hymn Stories*), Patricia Kennedy (available from Guideposts/Ideals), Douglas Bond (the "Mr. Pipes" series), and a couple of new books by

Robert Morgan (*Then Sings My Soul*, books 1 and 2, from Thomas Nelson, which as I write I have just ordered), among many others. I myself have written just such a book, *Songs of Zion* (available from www.faith-facts.com - I am hoping that maybe a second volume can someday be added). In addition, I have a daily hymn study e-mail list that some people have told me they use for devotions and homeschool studies; anyone can join it free by sending a blank e-mail to hymnoftheday-subscribe@yahoo.com.

That leaves us with how to incorporate a study of the great music of our Western Cultural Heritage, especially for non-music majors and other people with little musical background. Using two excellent books, *The Gift of Music: Great Composers and Their Influence* by Jane Stuart Smith and Betty Carlson, and *Spiritual Lives of the Great Composers* by Patrick Cavanaugh, I developed an introductory music curriculum for grades five through eight that involves reading from these books and other sources about the great composers, writing a report about their lives and music, and listening to a representative work composed by each of them (usually available from the local library). What I like about these two books is that, first, they minimize a lot of the ungodliness that unfortunately characterized the lives of some great composers and, second, they actually emphasize the influence of religious beliefs in the work of many great composers. I plan to go ahead and include the outline of this curriculum later, so more explanation will be given at that time. [See editorial note at the end of the article – Editor.]

Music may not be thought of as a “core” subject, but as I have said I believe that it is an important one. And even if one does not think that it is “necessary,” it is certainly a very pleasant subject to study. At least, what I learned in my musical studies continues to give me hours of enjoyment as I listen to great music. To conclude, let me repeat a couple of points that I have already tried to make, which, if you do not remember anything else, I hope will impress you. A knowledge of the music of great composers as studied in their historical settings is very helpful for a better understanding of our Western Cultural Heritage. And a knowledge of the fundamentals of music can be very helpful in developing and increasing our ability in praising our God. “Make a joyful shout to the LORD, all you lands! Serve the LORD with gladness; come before His presence with singing” (Psalm 100:1-2).

[Editor’s note: Wayne has graciously agreed to allow us to publish this article along with the music curriculum he has written entitled “Homeschooler’s Guide to the Great Orchestral Music of the Western World.” Look for the curriculum in our next issue of *Family Times*. We offer our sincere thanks to Wayne for allowing us to publish this material.]

Web Site to Rate College Professors

Submitted to Homeschoolers’ List by Joan Elder

For those of you with children attending community college for dual crediting, and also for those with college-bound children, this site is **very** helpful for not only avoiding bad professors but finding professors that are a good match for your learning style.

<http://www.ratemyprofessors.com/>

[Editorial note: The web site consists of evaluation of college professors by college students who have taken courses taught by those professors. Think a moment and you will see some potential hazards, as well as advantages, of that approach. How a student rates a professor may tell you as much about the student as it does about the professor. A student who does well in a class would be more likely to give a professor a high rating than would a student who did poorly in the class. In addition, there are matters of simple personal preferences regarding teachers, plus the fact that some students just don’t like teachers who require them to work hard. Then there is the issue of possible conflict between student and professor in moral or social values. A number of Florida College professors are rated on the site, but I was dismayed at the crude language used by some FC students in their comments. Imagine what might be said by worldly students at secular institutions about their professors! In short, I found the site to be interesting and informat-

ive, but I urge parents to view it with their future college students and take into account the source of the comments. – Dave Pratte]

My Daddy Prays for Me

Author Unknown

When Daddy prays the house gets still
His voice is slow and deep
We shut our eyes, the clock ticks loud
So quiet we must keep.

When Daddy prays he doesn't use
The words the preacher does.
He prays for lots of different things,
But mostly it's for us.

His prayers get awful long sometimes
And hard to understand.
So I just wiggle up quite close
And let him hold my hand.

I can't remember all of it;
I'm little yet, you see.
But there's one thing I can't forget:
My daddy prays for me.

Editorial Notes

Thanks again to our contributors, especially Sally Anne Perz and Wayne Walker for their excellent articles. Be sure to send us any other material you believe will be helpful to our readers.

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