

CSTHEA QUICK START GUIDE

2009

This guide is intended to get you started quickly down the homeschooling path. This is not an exhaustive resource guide to home schooling.

At the expo, please seek out the ladies wearing the silk flowers if you have questions. These are veteran homeschool moms that are willing to help you.

THINGS TO KNOW

Styles of Home Schooling

Traditional Approach— This approach uses text and workbooks. Examples of curriculum using this method would be *Abeka*, *Bob Jones*, *Rod and Staff*, *Christian Liberty Press*, and *Alpha Omega*. Some questions to ask yourself before trying this approach are listed below.

1. Did my child perform well in a classroom?
2. Does my child like to complete assignments and to have defined goals?
3. Will my child complete assigned tasks with a minimum of prodding from me?
4. Am I the kind of person who will follow through with the lesson plans and pace of the course of instructions?
5. Does my child read well and have good comprehension skills?
6. Can my child work well independently?
7. Can my child learn without a lot of variety to the teaching materials?



Strengths of the Textbook/Workbook Approach

1. Everything is laid out for ease of use.
2. Follows a standardized scope and sequence.
3. Has a definite milestone of accomplishments.
4. Testing and assigning grades is easy to do.

Weakness of the Textbook/Workbook Approach

1. Is geared to the generic child. Does not take into account individual learning styles, strengths and weakness, or interest
2. Is teacher directed and chalkboard oriented
3. Expensive when teaching multiple children

Classical Approach— Based on three stages of learning called the trivium. The first stage (the Grammar Stage) covers early elementary ages and focuses on reading, writing, and spelling; the study of Latin; and developing observation, listening and memorization skills. The second stage (the Dialectic Stage) covers middle school ages and teaches logical discussion, debate, and how to draw correct conclusions and support them with facts. The final stage (the Rhetoric Stage) covers high school and seeks to produce a student who can use language, both written and spoken, eloquently and persuasively. Examples of curriculum using this method would be *The Omnibus by Veritas Press*, *The Well Trained Mind by Susan Wise Bauer*, and *Teaching the Trivium: Christian Homeschooling in a Classical Style by Harvey and Laurie Bluedorn*.

Some questions to ask yourself before trying this approach are listed below.

1. Does my family like to read good literature?
2. Are my children intellectually oriented and comfortable with a rigorous academic approach?
3. Am I a learner? Am I comfortable learning alongside my children so I can teach them things I never studied?
4. Do I like to study and discuss ideas that have influenced civilization?

Strengths of the Classical Approach

1. Teaches thinking skills and verbal/written expression
2. Creates self learners
3. Has produced great minds throughout history

Weakness of the Classical Approach

1. Requires a scholarly teacher and student
2. May overemphasize ancient disciplines and classics

The Unit Study Approach — This approach takes a theme or topic and delves into it deeply over a period of time, integrating language arts, science, social studies, math, and fine arts as they apply. Some examples of curriculum using this method would be *Amanda Bennett*, *D.P.&K Productions*, *Five in a Row*, *KONOS*, and *Valerie Bendt*. Some questions to ask yourself before trying this approach are listed below.

1. Am I a creative person?
2. Do I like trying to make everything interesting and fun?
3. Do my children have a variety of interest and learning styles?
4. Can I live with the fact that there may be “gaps” in my children’s education?
5. Do I have the time and energy to be the driving, creative force behind the development of units?

Strengths of the Unit Study Approach

1. All ages can learn together
2. Children can delve as deeply or as lightly into a subject as they like
3. The family’s interest can be pursued
4. Students get the whole picture
5. Intense study of one topic is the more natural way to learn



Weakness of the Unit Study Approach

1. It is easy to leave educational “gaps”
2. Hard to assess the level of learning occurring
3. Record keeping may be difficult
4. Prepared unit study curricula can be expensive
5. Do it yourself unit studies require planning
6. Too many activity-oriented unit studies may cause burn-out of the teacher and student
7. Subjects that are hard to integrate into the unit may be neglected

Literature-Based Approach — Uses study guides and classic children’s literature. Some examples of curriculums using this method would be *Sonlight* and *Beautiful Feet*. Some questions to ask yourself before trying this approach are listed below.

1. Does our family like to read, both alone and together through reading aloud?
2. Am I comfortable with more of a “free form” approach to learning?
3. Do I trust my children to learn on their own?

Strengths of the Literature-Based Approach

1. Exposes children to a wide variety of books
2. Encourages curiosity, creative thinking, and a love of learning
3. Eliminates meaningless tasks, busywork

Weakness of the Literature-Based Approach

1. Time consuming
2. Can be difficult to stick to the schedule
3. Sometimes hard to find books
4. Prepackaged curriculum including all the pre-selected books can be expensive

Living Book or Charlotte Mason Approach — Mason’s approach to academics was to teach basic reading, writing, and math skills, then expose children to the best sources of knowledge for all other subjects. This meant giving children experience like nature walks, observing and collecting wildlife; visiting art museums; and reading real books with “living ideas.” She called such books “living books” because they made the subjects “come alive” unlike textbooks that tend to be dry and dull and assume the reader cannot think for him/herself. Some examples of curriculums using this method would be *Amblesideonline.org*, *Charlotte Mason a Study Guide* by Penny Gardner, *Charlotte Mason Companion* by Karen Andreola, and *Charlotte Mason Education* by Catherine Levison. Some questions to ask yourself before trying this approach are listed below.

1. Does our family like to read both alone and together through reading aloud?
2. Am I comfortable with more of a “free form” approach to learning?
3. Do I trust my children to learn on their own?
4. Will I follow through with exposing my children firsthand to nature and to great art?

Strengths of the Living Books or Charlotte Mason Approach

1. Stresses formation of good character and habits
2. Exposes children to real objects and books instead of interactions with distilled information
3. Encourages curiosity, creative thinking, and a love of learning

4. Eliminates meaningless tasks, busywork

Weakness of the Living Books or Charlotte Mason Approach

1. May neglect higher level studies because of emphasis on art, literature, and nature study
2. May become too eclectic

Other options – If you are not comfortable teaching a particular subject, you can seek out the assistance of groups such as Foundations Collegium (423-821-3314) or *Hilger Higher Learning* (706-820-1983). *There are many other opportunities for meeting this need. Check out the Local homeschool services page in the Esprit newsletter for more options.*

***Much of the information in the Learning Styles section of this guide was taken from the Elijah Company catalog. Special thanks to the Elijah Company (now defunct) for allowing us to reprint the information. ***

A Few Popular Catalogs

Abeka	800 – 874 – 2352	abeka.com
Alpha Omega Publications	800 – 622 – 3070	home-schooling .com
Beautiful Feet Books	800 – 889 – 1978	bfbooks.com
Bob Jones	800 – 845 – 7531	bjup.com
Christian Book Dist	978 – 977 – 5055	christianbook.com
Christian Liberty Press	800 – 832 – 2741	homeschool .org
Greanleaf Press	615 – 449 - 1617	greanleafpress.com
Lifetime books & Gifts	800 – 377 – 0390	lifetimeonline.com
Rainbow Resource Center	888 – 841 – 3456	rainbowresource.com
Sonlight	303 – 730 – 8668	sonlight.com
Tobin’s Lab	800 – 522 – 4776	tobinlab.com
Veritas Press	800 – 922 – 5082	veritaspress.com
Whole Heart Catalog	800 – 311 - 2146	wholeheart.com

A Few Helpful Books

How to Homeschool: A Practical Approach, by Gayle Graham
 The Ultimate Guide To Homeschooling, by Debra Bell
 Choosing & Using Curriculum, by Joyce Herzog
 The Way They Learn, by Cynthia Tobias
 Educating the Whole Hearted Child, by Clay & Sally Clarkson
 Charlotte Mason Companion, by Karen Andreola
 100 Top Picks For Homeschooling Curriculum, by Cathy Duffy



Things to accomplish at the Home Education Expo

1. Register with a church related school or the superintendent of schools.
 - Aaron Academy
 - Homelife Academy
 - Family Christian Academy
 - Daniel 1 Academy
 - Gateway

These four church-related schools are represented at this Home Education Expo. Talk to each one to find the church-related school you prefer. The church-related schools can answer questions regarding Tennessee laws, record keeping, grading and curriculum choices. You also have the option of registering with the

superintendent of schools. Tennessee law does not require registering with the Superintendent of schools. Most homeschoolers choose a church -related school in order not to be limited on their curriculum choices.

2. Visit the HSLDA (Home School Legal Defense Assoc.) booth. CSTHEA recommends you become a member of HSLDA. You can receive a 15% discount on the HSLDA membership if you are a member of THEA or registered with a church related school.

3. Attend workshops that will be beneficial in helping you learn more about homeschooling. There is a complete listing of workshops available at the CSTHEA table. Possible workshops to consider are:

Getting Started With Aaron Academy.....	Friday 10:00	Saturday 12:15
Choosing & Using Curriculum With Joyce Herzog.....	Friday 10:00	
High School with Gateway.....	Friday 5:30	Saturday 1:30
Choosing Curriculum in Tough Economic Times with Homeschool Bookworm.....	Friday 12:30	Saturday 2:45
Charlotte Mason and her Methods with Simply Charlotte Mason.....	Friday 3:00	
Designing a High School Program with For Such a Time as This.....	Friday 5:30	
Homeschooling & Goal based Planning with Homelife Academy.....	Friday 6:45	Saturday 2:45
Ordering our Priorities with Heavenly Publishing	Friday 11:15	
An Easy Approach to Optimize & Organize With Sue Patrick’s Workbox System.	Friday 1:45	
Classical Teaching – But Is It? For such a Time as This	Friday 4:15	
Combining Classical Education, Charlotte Mason, & Unit Studies With a Christian Perspective with My Fathers World.....	Friday 10:00	
Power of Good Habits in Your Homeschool with Simply Charlotte Mason.		Saturday 9:45
Raising Daughters & Sons for God with Daughters of God.	Friday 4:15	

4. Sign up for the area wide newsletter called the Esprit. Get a Free copy of the Esprit at the CSTHEA table. There is a \$3.00 discount off the Esprit subscription if you sign up at the expo. Consider purchasing a previous edition of the CSTHEA Home School Handbook for \$1.00 also available at the CSTHEA table. The handbook has lots of valuable information and a reprinting of the handbook is not planned. It is planned for the handbook to be available in the future on the CSTHEA website. www.csthea.org

5. Purchase curriculum



After The Home Education Expo What Do I Do?

1. Join a support group and attend parent meetings. Attached is a list of local support groups.
2. To learn even more about the homeschooling method you have chosen do a Google search on that style.
3. Get a mentor. Most support groups can help you find a mentor.
4. Go through all the books and materials you purchased and organize them and your time. There are many homeschool organizers on the market.
5. Plan to attend the Big Ridge Home Educators special August meeting. This meeting is designed to help and to encourage the new homeschool parents. The meeting will be at Grace Bible Church at 3827 Hixson Pike, Chattanooga on Aug. 11, 2009 at 7 pm. (Big Ridge Home Educators is a support group, however; you do not have to be a member or become a member to attend this meeting.)