

HOMESCHOOLING WITH A TODDLER UNDERFOOT

A MENTOR MOM © CLASS

by Yvonne Swinson

Prepared for the 2010 LDSEHE Education Conference in Buena Vista, Virginia

The Baby is the Lesson, Diane Hopkins,

<http://www.schoolofabraham.com/babylesson.htm>

How to be a Christ like person is the most valuable lesson a child could ever learn! The lesson is learned moment by moment; watching a parent being patient, handling frustration with kindness, pressing on for the goal in spite of numerous interruptions, valuing each child's needs regardless of inconvenience.

That valuable insight--how Mother handles the baby is the real lesson--has dramatically changed how I view my home school. I am teaching foremost my values: godly character, kindness, respect for others, individuality, sacrifice and a host of other Christ like attributes.

Finding Joy in the Journey, President Thomas S. Monson, October Conference 2008

If you are still in the process of raising children, be aware that the tiny fingerprints that show up on almost every newly cleaned surface, the toys scattered about the house, the piles and piles of laundry to be tackled will disappear all too soon and that you will – to your surprise – miss them profoundly. Stresses in our lives come regardless of our circumstances. We must deal with them the best we can. But we should not let them get in the way of what is most important – and what is most important almost always involves the people around us.

Daughters of God, M. Russell Ballard, April Conference 2008

I am impressed by countless mothers who have learned how important it is to focus on the things that can only be done in a particular season of life. If a child lives with parents for 18 or 19 years, that span is only one-fourth of a parent's life. And the most formative time of all, the early years in a child's life, represents less than one-tenth of a parent's normal life. It is crucial to focus on our children for the short time we have them with us and to seek, with the help of the Lord, to teach them all we can before they leave our homes. This eternally important work falls to mothers and fathers as equal partners. I am grateful that today many fathers are more involved in the lives of their children. But I believe that the instincts and the intense nurturing involvement of mothers with their children will always be a major key to their well-being. In the words of the proclamation on the family, "Mothers are primarily

responsible for the nurture of their children" ("The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Liahona*, Oct. 2004, 49; *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102).

Elder Ballard's talk includes specific things moms, dads, children and the church can do so that mothers can reduce the pressure and enjoy their families more. It's application for homeschooling is beautiful.

Best Tools:

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| Gadgets: | A sling or baby carrier, baby swings, bouncy seats, safety gates and other safety devices |
| Learning Activities: | Special activities for little ones – puzzles, play-doh, blocks, coloring books, Tangrams, Baby Mozart, Music |
| People: | Dad, Older siblings, Mentors, Other family members or friends |
| Scheduling: | NAP TIME, altered bedtimes, flexible school days, minimizing extracurricular activities, consolidation of other activities and errands. |
| Other: | Real life learning. Reading. Whole-family learning. |
| Most Important: | Prayer, Creativity, Inspiration, Patience, Perspective, Trust |

Yvonne is an avid voice for the homeschooling community and is the creator of the "Real Mom" guides. She now resides in Utah with her husband and 5 children.