

HOMESCHOOLING THE REAL MOM WAY

A MENTOR MOM © CLASS

by Yvonne Swinson

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

How did I become a Real Mom?

Some years ago I decided I was a “real” mom. Didn’t much like the title “stay-at-home” mom. Something about the word “stay” sounded too inactive for what I was doing. I did like the term “SUPERMOM”. Then I met a woman with three sets of twins – yes THREE SETS – born in six years. I felt suddenly under-qualified for the title. There is, of course, the constant and age-old struggle to be the “perfect mom”. But I woke up long ago to the facts that my house will never be all the way clean, my children will never be all the way fed (certainly not with meals made and frozen a month ago), I will never be all the way fit, and those cute little matching dresses will never be all-the-way sewn (at least not before they’re outgrown). So I am a “real” mom. Nothing more, nothing less.

What guides our homeschooling?***

#1 – The Spirit teaches EVERYTHING better than I can – from gospel to history to math to housekeeping. A very wise mother once told me that she wished to be a conduit between the heavens and her children and to so purify herself that nothing in her got in the way of that channel. I agree. It is a steep challenge indeed, but it is what we aim for.

#2 – Reading RULES! We read and read and read. Our home is filled with books. Our library card is full. If my children learn to read and love to read, they can teach themselves anything.

#3 – Math cannot be avoided. We hit it head-on. This is the one subject we do a lot like a school classroom. But we also do LOTS of real life math – doubling recipes, balancing the checkbook, grocery shopping and budgeting.

#4 – We put extra emphasis on American History – because America is a promised land, because our government was God-inspired, because this is where most of the events of the restoration took place, and because America has a special place in the events of the Second Coming.

What exactly are the Real Mom guides?

Real Mom guides are 36-week study programs for the Book of Mormon, Latter-day Prophets and American History. All of them incorporate memorization, scripture exploration, map and timeline work, creative writing/notebook/discussion ideas, and most importantly, lots of reading. Feel free to come by for a thorough look at our samples.

What is your latest project?

Last summer, I sought to go through my father’s papers, along with notes from his funeral and compile them into a book for my children. We lost my sweet father to lymphoma 4 years ago, but I did not want my children to lose the wisdom and the stories and the advice they

would have had if he were still with us. One of the gems I found was a book he kept of all of his favorites quotes, stories, poems and proverbs. In going through them, I found that there were wonderful stories from his life and mine that correlated with many of the quotes, and so I partnered them together in 33 mini-chapters about life’s greatest lessons. A couple of friend’s proof read it for me. Their excitement encouraged me to send it to Cedar Fort, where is met with an enthusiastic response. [33 Habits of a Really Good Man](#) is now available at bookstores near you, or you may get a personalized copy here at the conference.

Dallin H. Oaks, Conference Report, November 1999 “Gospel Teaching

“Teachers and class members should seek the Spirit during the lesson. A person may teach profound truths, and class members may engage in stimulating discussions, but unless the Spirit is present, these things will not be powerfully impressed upon the soul. ...” (Church Handbook of Instructions)

Joseph Fielding Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, Vol 3

It is within our power to guide our youth in their reading and to cultivate in their hearts a desire for *good books*. It is most unfortunate where a person is not possessed with the desire for good reading. The reading habit, like charity, should begin at home. *It is the duty of every parent to provide in his home a library of suitable books to be at the service of the family.* The library need not be large, nor the books of the most expensive binding, but there should be a well chosen variety of the most select that can be obtained.”

“Children should be encouraged in the home to read and be instructed in the value of good books and how to discriminate between the good and the bad in literature.”

33 Habits of a Really Good Man

Yvonne Swinson

A small sample of life's greatest lessons and Dad's favorite quotes:

Stretch your Brain

"Vacant lots and vacant minds are dumping grounds for rubbish."

Unknown

Stick-to-it-tiveness

"Success is triumph – a little 'try' and a lot of 'umph.'"

Unknown

Do Your Best

"Average is just as close to the bottom as it is to the top."

Unknown

Change Begins with Me

"Watch the man behind the man in front of you."

Unknown

Ingenuity

"Don't be so narrow-minded that your ears cause friction."

Unknown

Serve Others

"Do all the good you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, and all the times you can, to all the people you can, for as long as you ever can."

John Wesley

Nurturing

"The sound of a kiss is not so loud as that of a cannon, but it's echo lasts a great deal longer."

Oliver Wendell Holmes

Know When to Stop

"When you get in deep water, keep your mouth shut"

Unknown

Talking

"To avoid trouble and ensure safety, breathe through your nose, it keeps your mouth shut."

Unknown

Obligation

"If every member of the church was just like me, what kind of church would this church be?"

Unknown

Work to Learn

"God has created us with two ends, one to think with and one to sit on. Heads you win, tails you lose."

Unknown

Learn to Work

"What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly"

Thomas Paine

Don't Worry

"Worrying is like a rocking chair. It gives you something to do, but gets you nowhere."

Van Wilder

Speak Well of Others

"Two things are bad for the heart – running up stairs and running down people."

Bernard M. Baruch

"The best way to make a mountain out of a molehill is to add a little dirt."

Unknown

Know Where You're Going

"When a man doesn't know what harbor he is making, no wind is right"

Unknown

Many more, along with Dad's wit, wisdom and life stories, available in 33 Habits of a Really Good Man, the perfect Father's Day Gift. Only \$8.99.

Come by the Polar Star table for your personalized copy(ies).

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.