

THE “WHAT” OF HOMESCHOOLING: CHOOSING THE BEST CURRICULUM FOR YOUR FAMILY

BEGINNERS SEMINAR

By Tina Nokes

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

Classical Curriculum

Based on the Greco-Roman trivium, a classical education is one steeped in the Great Books and classical literature. It progresses a student through a basic foundation of facts and exposure to subjects, to the reasons and motivations which underlie each topic, and finally the ability to adequately express opinions, positions, and thoughts on each area studied.

“The Well-Trained Mind: A Guide to Classical Education At Home,” Jessie Wise, Susan Wise Bauer. A popular approach among homeschoolers. Provides an overview of the classical method as well as grade-by-grade subject-by-subject curriculum recommendations.

www.welltrainedmind.com
www.peacehillpress.com

Charlotte Mason Approach

Ms. Mason, a British turn-of-the-century educator, founded the Parents National Education Union (PENU), a training organization for parents and governesses educating children at home. She believed that children were from God and should be educated as such.

“A Charlotte Mason Education: A Home Schooling How-To Manual” and “More Charlotte Mason Education,” Catherine Levison. Both books give an overview of the Charlotte Mason method and a breakdown of methodology by subject. Some book recommendations are included. For a more thorough list of materials and a list of subjects by grade level, check **“A Literary Education”** also by Catherine Levison.

“The Original Homeschooling Series,” Charlotte Mason. A six-volume collection written by Mason. A meaty read, but worth it.

“When Children Love to Learn,” Elaine Cooper. A compilation of essays by teachers from Charlotte Mason schools.

www.amblesideonline.org – Lots of curriculum recommendations by grade level using the Charlotte Mason method.

www.simplycharlottemason.com – a curriculum resource.

Unit Studies

A thematic approach to learning in which the student is immersed in a time period or topic to learn through all of the senses.

www.unitstudy.com – Developed by Amanda Bennet. Several different topics to choose from.

www.konos.com – Several topical studies. Her unit studies tend to promote active involvement and creativity.

www.fiveinarow.com – Literature based unit studies.

You can also Google “homeschool unit studies” and find many for free.

Thomas Jefferson Education

TJ Ed stresses immersing students in the classics, encouraging interface with mentors, and developing leaders as opposed to an education meant to train the work force or professionals in our society.

“A Thomas Jefferson Education: Teaching a Generation of Leaders for the Twenty-First Century,” Oliver DeMille. Provides an overview of a Thomas Jefferson education, outlines developmental phases of learning, and discusses seven pillars for effective homeschooling.

“A Thomas Jefferson Education Home Companion,” Oliver DeMille, Rachel DeMille, Diann Jeppson. More on the topic.

“Leadership Education: The Phases of Learning,” Oliver and Rachel DeMille.

Unschooling

“Teach Your Own,” John Holt. An early pioneer in the homeschooling movement. The philosophy holds that children are always learning and a public school education dampens the desire. A basic idea is that when children are interested in a subject, they will immerse in it and learn. An educational philosophy where the child guides his own learning with oversight by the parent.

www.holtgws.com

Eclectic Approach

Any mix of approaches that fit the needs of the family/student.

General Curriculum Ordering Resources

www.rainbowresource.com or 888-841-3456 – Well indexed with great reviews. Over 1300 pages. Request a free catalog.

www.ldfr.com – Latter-day Family Resources. Lots of mainstream homeschooling supplies as well as extra stuff that I can only find through them. Lots of LDS homeschool types of materials.

www.booksamillion.com – Books A Million. A regular bookseller that carries some homeschooling materials. I always check here first because they have good prices.

www.amazon.com – Amazon. Also a regular bookseller with some homeschooling materials.

www.ebay.com – During the summer months you can find homeschooling materials for auction prices. I also sell used curriculum here to recoup some costs.

Tina Nokes lives in Vienna, Virginia and has homeschooled for nine years. The mother of four boys, she began homeschooling her oldest son shortly after he entered 9th grade. He has now graduated from college, and her second is on a mission in Japan. She enjoys teaching “Young Statesmen” a civic class for teens. Tina graduated from BYU with a degree in Advertising and has worked and done freelance work in advertising. She's also owned a retail store, rental properties, and a resume writing/employment coaching business.