

THE WHY OF HOMESCHOOLING

BEGINNERS SEMINAR

by Misty Foxley

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1. The First and Foundational Reason: Because the Spirit has led us to.

- **Question:** Why are some parents directed by the Spirit to home educate? **Most likely answer:** Because they've been asking in prayer some important questions concerning their children and their education.
- As we follow these promptings, we begin to gain experience and understand more thoroughly what home education is—what the benefits are, the opportunities, and the advantages. We also begin to understand what the Lord has in mind for our family, particularly for each of our children.

2. We, as parents, have a sacred and solemn duty to provide for our children's physical and spiritual well being; this, of course, includes overseeing their education.

- How does the Church regard homeschooling officially? No official statement, but CES has stated: **"The Church is neutral regarding home schooling. The manner of education of children is considered to be the parents' decision."** (CES Statement "Clarification of LDS Church Educational System Seminary Policies on Home Schooling." Statement approved by the CES Executive Council on 16 November 2000.)
- **What do the scriptures say?** Nephi: *"I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father."* This is a pattern found throughout the scriptures, particularly in the Book of Mormon. Righteous parents have always taken a special interest in the education of their children.
- Brigham Young taught that it was just as much the duty of the parents to pay for and provide for their children's education as it was to provide food, clothing and shelter for them.

3. Striving for a Spiritually Strengthening Education

- From the BYU website: *"The founding charge of BYU is to teach every subject with the Spirit. It is not intended that all of the faculty should be categorically teaching religion constantly in their classes, but . . . that every . . . teacher in this institution would keep his subject matter bathed in the light and color of the restored gospel."* (Spencer W. Kimball, "Education for Eternity," Preschool Address to BYU Faculty and Staff, 12 September 1967.)
- **The testimony of Christ is the foundation of our education:** "I have commanded you to bring up your children in light and truth... You have not taught your children light and truth and that wicked one hath power, as

yet, over you, and *this is the cause of your affliction.*" (D&C 93:40 & 42; italics added.)

- Brigham Young taught the early saints to support Church Schools and warned that "tax supported" education would eventually **dissolve church and religious influence in the schools, stripping our children of a solid foundation of religious and moral education.** (*emphasis added*) This lesser known prophecy was fulfilled. (For more information, read John D. Monnett, *Revealed Educational Principles & the Public Schools*. This is a treatise on the history of education in the Church.)
- Another quote from the above source: Wilford Woodruff, in a letter to Stake Presidents, dated June 8, 1888: *"We feel that the time has arrived when the proper education of our children should be taken in hand by us as a people... Our children, if left to the training they receive in these [tax-funded government] schools will grow up entirely ignorant of those principles of salvation for which the Latter-day Saints have made so many sacrifices... The desire is universally expressed by all thinking people in the Church that we should have schools where the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the Book of Doctrine and Covenants can be used as text books, and where the principles of our religion may form a part of the teaching of the schools."* (*emphasis added*)
- *"Like a ship without a rudder, without a compass, we drift from the family values which have anchored us in the past. Now we are caught in a current so strong that unless we correct our course, civilization as we know it will surely be wrecked to pieces. Moral values are being neglected and prayer expelled from public schools on the pretext that moral teaching belongs to religion. At the same time, atheism, the secular religion, is admitted to class, and our youngsters are proselyted to a conduct without morality... The distance between the Church and a world set on a course which we cannot follow will steadily increase."* (Boyd K. Packer, General Conference, April 1994.)
- **Prepare yourself.** Keep learning. Keep seeking for answers, and keep asking questions. "Act" when you receive answers. Work steadily (like the tortoise, not the hare), and do your best to apply the knowledge you have been given. Gradually, you will grow in confidence and ability. Over time you'll learn how to simplify and more efficiently accomplish the most important things in your children's lives (and cut back on the rest).

Some Excellent Homeschool Books:

****Neil J. Flinders**, *Teach the Children: An Agency Approach to Education*

Susan Wise Bauer and Jessie Wise, *The Well-Trained Mind: A Guide to Classical Education at Home*

John Holt, *Learning All the Time* (also recommend: *How Children Fail* and *How Children Learn*)

****Oliver Van DeMille**, *A Thomas Jefferson Education: Teaching a Generation of Leaders for the 21st Century*

Karen Andreola, *Charlotte Mason Companion*

Dr. Raymond and Dorothy Moore, *The Successful Homeschool Family Handbook* (also: *School Can Wait*)

Nancy Wallace, *Better Than School: One Family's Declaration of Independence*

David and Micki Colfax, *Homeschooling for Excellence*

Christopher J. Klicka, *The Right Choice: Home Schooling*

Ruth Beechick *You Can Teach Your Child Successfully*

****Reed Benson**, 1981 BYU PhD Dissertation, "The Development of a Home School" (Google it for a free download from www.lds-nha.org)

John Taylor Gatto, *Dumbing Us Down* and *The Underground History of American Education*

****John D. Monnett**, *Revealed Educational Principles & the Public Schools*

****LDS Authors**

4. **A common, early realization: "I CAN teach my child!** (Even better than the trained, professional teacher!")
 - **Trust your instincts.** That's the Spirit leading you. Teaching our children is a natural extension of parenting. Of course you can do it. No one (on earth) cares more about your children than you do. (Like Nephi, He'll help "me" accomplish this work that He's led "me" to do. See Nephi 3:7)
5. **Family relationships are greatly improved in the home school environment.**
 - Quote from a home school mother: "One of the advantages of having a home school is the greater opportunity to draw closer to your children. Physical closeness engenders emotional closeness. The advantages of snuggling together with a book are so tremendous that it is impossible to catalogue them all. Naturally, the child learns from what you are reading to him, but the most important lessons he will get from this time together are what I call the Life Lessons. He will learn about love, he will learn about self-value, about trust, about spirituality." (From Reed Benson, "The Development of a Home School", see above.)

6. **Socialization at School: It's not all it's cracked up to be**
 - Adults tend to romanticize their memories of "school days."
 - If in doubt, spend time in the schools, especially during lunch and breaks; you will quickly gain an appreciation for those kids who get up every morning and "go to school."
 - John Holt, former educator: "Schools are not only destructive of intellect, but of character. With very few exceptions, the social life of our schools is mean-spirited, competitive, status seeking, snobbish, cruel, often violent and full of talk about who went to whose party and who did not." (*US News and World Report*, 22 Sept. 1980)
 - **Social skills are best learned at home, and least likely learned in the peer environment.** This is obvious. (Didn't you know plenty of "socially challenged" people in your own school experience?)
 - **Home school students socialize in a more natural way**—with people of all ages in the community, arranged by family choice.
 - A valuable truth about friendships in school: **Kids at school have very little time to truly "socialize."** If a student wishes to develop a meaningful friendship with another student, parents arrange for out-of-school get-togethers (just like home school children do!)
7. **The Power of Individualized tutoring**
 - "There is no satisfactory substitute for a student spending time alone with the teacher, one on one—tailor made teaching—especially for the gifted student and the slow learner." (Reed Benson, "The Development of a Home School." See above.)
 - "Individualized instruction offers the opportunity of setting a personal pace for each child, with less competitiveness and comparison." (Ibid)
8. **The sky is the limit! When home "school" transforms into a FAMILY LIFESTYLE of learning.**
 - After withdrawing my children from school, I felt like we finally took our life back—we could now determine, at last, what our focus was and spend time learning what we valued.
9. **Homeschooling WORKS!** Statistics verify it. If you are being led by the Spirit to do this, you will see that this is the RIGHT choice for your family. "By their fruits ye shall know them." You will not regret it.

Misty Foxley is the mother of six children who she has been homeschooling for over 18 years. Her oldest son recently returned from a mission and both he and his sister are students of private universities. The Foxleys currently live in Virginia, but have homeschooled in several states and countries. Misty is passionate about homeschooling, served for four years as president of LDSEHE, and is currently Chairman of the Board of Directors.