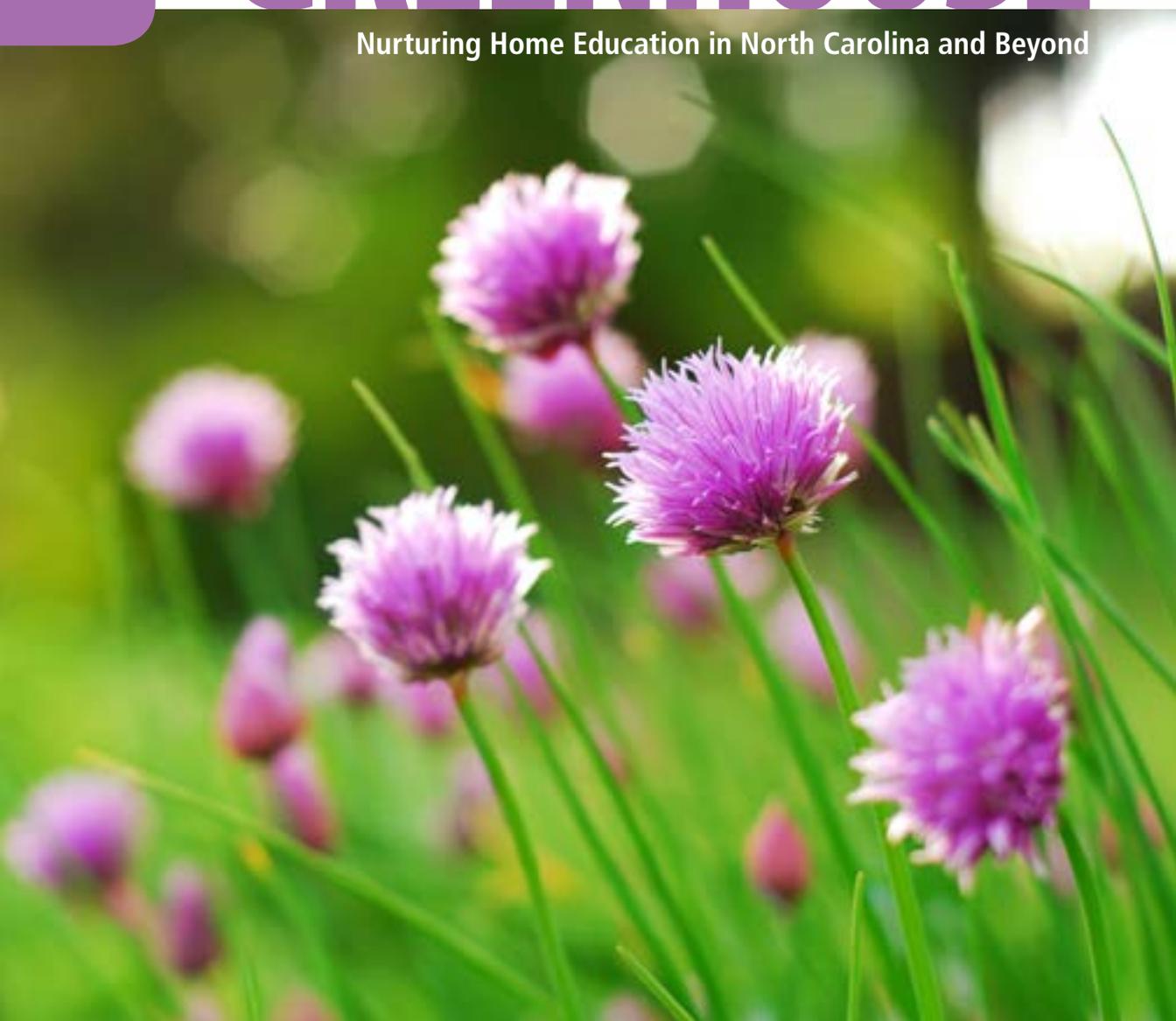


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GREENHOUSE

Nurturing Home Education in North Carolina and Beyond



In This Issue



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- Guidance for Choosing a Cognitive Ability Test
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- What if the Art Teacher Taught Math?
- The Power of Gifts

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Steve Lambert
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John Stonestreet
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Center for Christian Worldview

Education is not the
filling of a pail, but the
lighting of a fire.

— William Butler Yeats —



About GREENHOUSE

GREENHOUSE (ISSN 2169-916X) is the periodical of North Carolinians for Home Education. It is a quarterly—four regular issues, plus a bonus graduate issue. It is mailed to subscribers and posted online. The name GREENHOUSE was chosen to represent the type of care homeschooling parents are able to give to their children. Children are lovingly “tended” in a protected and nurturing environment until they are sufficiently mature to go out and take a place of service in the world. Letters and articles addressed to the GREENHOUSE become property of NCHE with full right to publication without further permission required. Ideas and opinions expressed in letters and articles do not necessarily represent those of NCHE.

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A FIRST FOR DR. BRADLEY: ADDRESSING AN ASSEMBLY OF HOMESCHOOLERS

by Kevin McClain

In May NCHE held its thirtieth annual conference in Winston-Salem. As I write this, I am still recovering from the whirlwind of the experience. The conference has been the cornerstone of the service NCHE provides the residents of North Carolina. The conference is a large-scale production, and there are many moving parts, from dozens of vendors and speakers, to hotels and buses and meals—not to mention technological complexities, such as registrations and recordings. The conference committee reviews the process each year, as it seeks ways to make things run more smoothly. Ultimately, I believe the event was a huge success!

The conference has many goals, one of which is to make accessible to North Carolina residents speakers whose message resonates with the mission of NCHE and the spirit of parent-directed education. Some of these speakers are focused on educational methods; others are more focused on how the family understands and articulates its educational rights and responsibilities. The latter are more engaged in what I call *public intellectualism*—civil discourse about a wide range of social issues that inevitably employs moral and even

theological concepts and categories.

This year NCHE was excited that Dr. Anthony Bradley of Kings College and the Acton Institute was one of our featured speakers. He delivered three talks, including the Thursday keynote. In this article, I will briefly touch upon some of the ideas that Dr. Bradley discussed. However, I want to carefully note that we featured six speakers including: Rachael Carman, Sean McDowell, Dr.

Jeff Myers, Diana Waring and Todd Wilson. All of these speakers were great and delivered messages which NCHE thinks are important. NCHE was excited to bring them to NC for the conference. The difference, however, between Dr. Bradley and the others is that Dr. Bradley has never spoken at a homeschooling conference. That fact alone is exciting for NCHE,

as well as for him. It is exciting for NCHE because it means we are fulfilling our mission to serve NC families. One of the ways we can do that is to introduce North Carolina citizens to individuals who have unique perspectives and platforms and whose ideas about society and public policies enrich our own.

Dr. Bradley delivered a fantastic keynote Thursday in which he spoke about how our culture encourages children to be dissatisfied with the simple, productive and peaceful existence, that is God's will for them. He asked us to think about 1 Thessalonians 4:11, "make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: You should mind your own business and work with your hands," in contrast to our current culture. Sadly, our culture encourages everyone to seek self-aggrandizing fame and glory, to be "awesome" and to feel discontent when not being the center of attention. Dr. Bradley said

that he was excited about homeschooling because of his own experiences in the college setting with students who had been homeschooled. He recognized their humility, their productivity and their heart of service. They seemed happy and ready to work at whatever was before them. These characteristics stand out, and Dr. Bradley thanked the room for their faithfulness to their children and their resistance to a culture that threatens to develop a

generation of frustrated, dysfunctional adults.

Earlier in the day, I enjoyed Dr. Bradley's talk about social theory. He spoke about two social concepts: subsidiarity and sphere sovereignty. These concepts emerged from Christendom during the turn of the nineteenth century and sought to challenge the prevailing view that emerged following the

enlightenment and industrial revolution concerning the capacity for humans to order society by way of a strong state. While these two concepts are different, they are typically seen as complementary. Subsidiarity is Catholic in origin; sphere sovereignty was developed by Protestants in the Netherlands. I encourage you, homeschooler, to understand and employ these two concepts. Dr. Bradley's talk provided a good introduction.

Of these two concepts, sphere sovereignty has had more influence on my thinking. Both concepts ultimately argue that the state is a legitimate social entity, created by God to help carry out God's will, but one with a limited role amongst the many existing legitimate entities, such as the church, the family, the market, the academy. The challenge is crafting social policies that acknowledge the diverse rights and responsibilities of these many social



Dr. Anthony Bradley and Kevin McClain.

entities and which honors the boundaries between the many social entities that exist.

It is important to note that these boundaries are not air-tight. That is to say that the social theorists who employ the concept of sphere sovereignty argue that each entity has a unique power, and that power should be exercised in a way that acknowledges the rights and responsibilities of the other entity and that assists it in its duty. In other words, the state is responsible for leading citizens in the pursuit of public justice, and the family is to assist the state in its attempt to carry out this right and responsibility. Likewise, the family is responsible for forming the character of the next generation, and the state is to assist the family as it seeks to carry out this right and responsibility. How do these two entities work together to help fulfill each other's mission? How does this apply to families and education? These are difficult questions, but working to answer these kinds of questions is work that is good. I think it means that each of the social entities, the church, the market and, yes, even the state, have a legitimate role in education. However, when it comes to the education of children, all entities should be following the lead of parents.

The first talk Dr. Bradley delivered had to do with race. This is an important topic for our country, including the homeschool community. Sadly, my duties elsewhere caused me to miss this talk. Dr. Bradley has published works that I would encourage you to add to your reading list. In summary, I am happy that NC homeschooling families had

a unique opportunity to hear Dr. Bradley and be introduced to his work. I am equally excited to hear that homeschooled children have had a positive impression on Dr. Bradley and others who are publically and actively talking about social theories.

For thirty years, NCHE has advocated for parent-directed education, and it is as important today as it has ever been to consider how the vision of parent-directed education helps society flourish and helps prevent society from falling victim to its own cultural fads. Ultimately, parent-directed education is a practice that empowers one of the smallest social units, a man and a woman and a small group of siblings, to radically impact culture. It is a great responsibility to rear the next generation. I'm thankful for the homeschooling leaders of the past who helped pave the way, as well as Christian social theorists, who argued and advocated for a more robust understanding of how the multiple social entities that God has ordained work together for the common good.



Kevin McClain, NCHE's president, and his bride, Brea, are embarking on their tenth year of homeschooling. Kevin recently earned his PhD in educational philosophy from UNCG where he is employed as an educational technologist. 🇺🇸

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The Freedom of Simplicity

by Amanda Garner

Each year I look forward to attending NCHC's homeschool conference in Winston-Salem. From all over the state we steadily roll in, building like a rising tide. For three days, we homeschoolers descend upon the city by the thousands, pushing strollers, pulling totes, packing sessions and perusing vendor booths. If I'm not careful, I can find myself drifting aimlessly over the sea of curricula, drowning in the waves of possibility. Look at the shiny new science book I've always wanted to try! Oh, that's the character trait series my best friend was raving about! And over there: the phonics program that will solve all my problems! Be still, my heart—it's the company who has the perfect unit studies with everything you need, all in one box!

Then that still, small voice of reason (or perhaps it's the checkbook) speaks: "Keep it simple." Don't get me wrong; I'm very thankful for all the choices and options I have in homeschooling my children. I've heard many a story from homeschool pioneers that included, "When we started teaching our kids at home we were barely able to convince *one* company to sell us school books!" But in our zeal to provide our children the very best education, we often fall into the trappings of a *newer and better* mentality. Not only is this thinking costly, it becomes an entanglement. Suddenly I feel pressured to use this program, read that book or try this method because I paid for it. That pressure builds as I push my kids to finish every single lesson, fill out every worksheet, read every page. The results? It steals our joy, discourages our children and frustrates our husbands.

May I encourage you to live in the freedom of simplicity? Let that idea wash over your weary soul like a soft summer shower, bringing refreshing hope. Be content with what you have, keep things simple, and enjoy this incredible journey called homeschooling!



Amanda and her husband, Wes, serve in full-time ministry in Oxford, NC, where they live, love and learn together. Married for twenty years, they have home educated their four children for the past decade. Amanda also enjoys encouraging other homeschool moms via her blog: www.dropsodelight.weebly.com.

A photograph of a young man and woman in formal attire. The woman is wearing a red dress and the man is in a black suit with a white shirt and tie. They are both smiling and looking down at a small, open, pink gift box that the woman is holding. The background is blurred, suggesting an indoor setting like a restaurant or event.

The Power of *Gifts*

by Diana Waring

Imagine a beautifully-wrapped box lovingly set in front of you. Carefully pick up and examine this mysterious gift. Here are the clues: Your name is on the label; the person who has given it loves you deeply; whoever wrapped it did such a marvelous job that you are certain that the gift contained inside must be even more spectacular. Now, wait. Stop and consider the kind of anticipation this would create inside of you. Would it bring a warm rush of delight, an awe of being the recipient of not only a gift but of the love that motivated it in the first place? Are you with me? Can you imagine the scene? With all of that heart-warming delight and eager anticipation, imagine unwrapping the box and discovering what lies inside. Ooooooh! Aaaaaah!!

Now, while this image is fresh in your mind, picture each member in your family. In ways beyond comprehension, each of us is like that mysterious, beautiful box holding uniquely precious gifts inside. As parents, we are the recipients of such an amazingly cutting-edge, bundled gift—otherwise known as a child—that marketing companies with all of their merchandising hype are left in the dust. And most astonishing of all, these infinitely priceless gifts have been given to us from the One who is Love itself.

Just as we take the time to learn the features and benefits of our most prized electronic appliances, so must we take the time to learn as much as we can about the unique ways our children are wired, put together, designed. As you study your children's learning styles, creative giftings, unique talents, passions and quirkiness, it is helpful if you will step back from the rush and pressures of daily homeschooling life (*"Is your bed made yet?" "Who left the milk out?" "Why haven't you finished your math?"*) to look at the bigger perspective of who these little people actually are and will become.

To help get us started on this path, consider a golden lab puppy. Have you ever seen one? As the puppy awkwardly stumbles and falls, trying to figure out how to use its paws for walking, we recognize that, though the puppy's paws are currently way too big for its body, it will soon grow into them. Our children's development is similar! The gifts that God has set inside of them need time and nurturing in order to grow into fully functional adult

usage. The gifts of a world-changing adult are awkward in a little child.

For instance, the famous Russian ballet dancer, Mikhail Baryshnikov, had the giftings and potential of a world class dancer as a little boy, but it was undoubtedly at an awkward, immature level. Can't you just imagine him fidgeting, bouncing, jumping around, slowly growing into his remarkable abilities—just like that golden lab puppy with its oversized paws? This is where the act of stepping back to gain perspective is invaluable. What would it have been like to be the parent of a child like Mikhail? If you are anything like I was, you would probably be more apt to tell him to sit down and stop fidgeting than to enjoy and appreciate this awkward, immature stage of an extraordinary gift! Learning how to enjoy, appreciate and honor the talents of our children while, at the same time, carefully raising up these immature and awkward little people represents both the extreme challenge and heady adventure of parenting.

I have often pondered what it must have been like for Barbara Walters, the famous interviewer, when she was a child. I can almost hear the comments of teachers when her remarkable ability to talk was considered something disruptive to the class, rather than a gift to the world—perhaps, because those are the kind of teacher comments said of me all of my life. And, yet, the One who gave this precious gift of gab had a plan and purpose for each recipient—to live a deeply satisfying life, full of meaning and opportunities to bless through the spoken word.

Not only are particular talents, like dancing or talking, awkward in childhood years, but so are the individual approaches to life and learning which seem to be hard-wired into us and our children. Why is it that some enjoy working with their hands—and they are quite good at a myriad of glorious artistic, mechanical, even surgical processes—while others thrive in the realm of philosophies, abstract concepts and highly regimented schedules? Why do some come to life when they are surrounded by people, while others light up when creating an artistic mess?

Have you noticed that we didn't place an order for these traits in our children? As I recall, no one handed me a menu from which I could select particular talents, styles and passions in my kids. And I can guess why: since we don't enjoy being uncomfortable or stretched, many of us would have happily settled for familiar, normal, even mundane characteristics. In our ignorance, we think that this would make us happy, but, in truth, this scenario would leave our lives and families colorless and insipid. Our Creator God, the One whose imagination and creative power runs the gamut from platypus to meerkat to manatee, loves us far too much to let us settle for anything less than a life-changing adventure.

As you ponder what this means in your life, as you reflect on each of your children and the particular challenges you face in dealing with their gifts, talents, passions and quirkiness, I'd like to share a thought from Scripture that sheds a powerful insight into this discussion.



Proverbs 18:16 says, "A man's gift makes room for him, and brings him before great men."

Carefully examine the mysteriously wrapped gift that is set in front of you—the one with your family name, given by One who loves you deeply and in such marvelously unique packaging that you just know the interior is even more spectacular. What anticipation this brings! The gift that is contained inside of your child will make room for him or her in a world desperately in need of the full expression of this particular gift. The gift may bear some similarity to the gifts of Bach, Michelangelo, George Washington Carver, Amy Carmichael, Mother Teresa, Steve Saint, Mikhail Baryshnikov or Barbara Walters, but whatever it is, as you diligently work to nurture and train your children, make it your aim to enjoy the puppy paws while they last.



Diana Waring is the author of Beyond Survival, Reaping the Harvest and Diana Waring's History Revealed world history curriculum. Diana discovered years ago that the key to education is relationship. Audiences on four continents have enthusiastically received her energetic speaking style. Diana was a featured speaker at the 2014 NCHE Annual Conference.



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Expectation Is Premeditated Resentment



by J. Mark Fox

He's had a tough day at work, with deadlines to meet, the boss on his case, clients unhappy about anything and everything. On top of all that, he's not sleeping well due to stress, and he's gained fifteen pounds in three months because, well, he just owes it to himself to eat what he likes—and lots of it. He is driving home, fuming about his day, and cannot wait to put his feet up and watch the big game, while ignoring everything else that seems to be spinning out of control.

Meanwhile, she has had it with the kids. The toddler has been throwing up, the five-year-old won't clean his room and keeps sneaking into the den and playing X-box, no matter how many times she tells him no. The baby has not slept all day, and the neighbor called, again, to yell about how "you people just can't seem to keep your stupid dog in your own yard!" She can't wait until her husband gets home so he can: (1) clean up the mess in the bathroom, ("Hey, I cleaned up the first four projectile vomits!") (2) spank the five-year-old and put X-box in the attic, or better, on Ebay, (3) call the neighbor about the dog and then tell her, his wife, how he is going to make sure it does not happen again, (4) take care of the baby so she can go for a walk or get a cup of coffee and have some *me time*.

You don't need me to draw a picture for you of what it's going to look like when those two meet at the front door, right? But unless one or both yield, lay down expectations, put aside their own needs in order to serve the other, there's a mountain of resentment about to move into each heart.

It's a well-known saying: "Expectation is premeditated resentment." One of the biggest changes in my marriage happened years ago when Cindy and I both learned to lay down our

expectations for each other. We learned to give each other the same grace that God has given us. In other words, to put Philippians 4:8 into practice: "If there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." So, I will decide not to think about the fact that Cindy may have been critical and complaining toward me recently but will think about what is good and true about her. And she will decide not to think about the fact that I am harsh and impatient at times, but will choose to think about what is good and true about me. We will choose to respect one another rather than try to change one another, because we know respect builds trust and honor.



In his book, *Sacred Marriage*, Gary Thomas writes about a tree in the Cascade Mountains that is seven hundred years old. This tree was 200 years old when Martin Luther was born. One of the reasons the trees on the western slope of the Cascade Mountains survive so long is simple, Thomas says: The forests there are so wet that lightning strikes cause relatively few fires. Marriages that are based on the gospel and mutual respect will still be struck by lightning: sexual temptations, communication problems, frustrations, unrealized expectations—but if those same marriages are heavily watered with the grace of the gospel, with an unwavering commitment in each spouse to please God and forgive one another just as Christ forgave us, then fires that normally destroy a marriage will not have a chance.



Mark and Cindy Fox have seven children, have homeschooled for twenty-five years and been happily married for nearly all of their thirty-two years together. Mark presented a workshop at the conference this year entitled, "Marriages that Thrive in Troubled Times." You may purchase the MP3 of this talk on nche.com until July 20. Mark blogs at jmarkfox.com.

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Understanding and Evaluating the World of Online Education



by Diane Allen and
Marji McIvaine

What *shall* we do with online classes? We shall do the same thing homeschoolers have been doing with curricula since homeschooling began—experiment, find what works for us, talk about them to others and use them as a tool to homeschool our kids. We will educate ourselves about them and then move forward. The following information will help you do just that.

What are online classes?

Our definition of online classes includes:

- Classes where a portion of the instruction is provided through an online media format by someone acting as the instructor
- Classes where the online instructor develops the course outline, creates and grades assignments and tests, interacts with the student and provides accountability.

Are online classes and a virtual school the same thing?

In the broadest definition a virtual school would be any course delivery system that uses the Internet to deliver instruction from a distance. Distance learning has been around since the turn of the century, and institutions like Keystone High School, Calvert (for elementary), several universities, BJU or ABEKA Video or Satellite schools are forerunners in this field. Traditionally, parents could choose an option that allowed them to simply access the materials and do their own grading, or an option that provided *distance* teacher oversight, direction and grading.

By this definition, online education is just a new format of the same concept in distance learning. Using a computer has allowed these classes to include live instruction and interpersonal interaction as part of the distance learning experience. Individual courses are available in an a la carte format—choose what you want, when you need it. Many homeschool families use online providers for some of their courses, rarely for all of the courses a student needs.

What about accredited programs and the NC Virtual Public School?

Accredited programs, while they are technically virtual/distance programs, generally establish their requirements and issue an *official* transcript from their institution. When you enroll in an accredited program, you are giving control over to that institution in exactly the same way as if you were enrolled in a brick and mortar school, and you must meet their expectations and accept their decisions in order to be promoted or graduated. The accredited institution is a virtual school that the homeschooler attends. Just remember, if you enroll your child in an accredited program, you must still comply with all the other homeschool regulations, and your designation remains that of a private homeschool in NC.

A major point of misunderstanding revolves around the NC Virtual Public School, which is a chartered *public institution in the state of NC*. Other virtual or distance learning programs, even ones where you can earn an accredited diploma, are not tied to the NC Department of Public Instruction and therefore do not compromise your homeschool status. Currently, you may not enroll in the complete Virtual Public School program and remain a homeschooler because the NC Virtual School is a public education institution.

Homeschooled families may enroll their child in one to three classes of the NC Virtual School as a visiting student without sacrificing their homeschool status, but these courses are usually not free. Current costs for individual classes are listed as \$510-\$640 per year.

Please note that this NC Virtual School concept is so new that even the officials in charge sometimes disagree about what should and should not be allowed. The rules are likely to change as these issues are resolved.

Are online classes legal in NC?

Utilizing online classes and other distance learning programs is completely legal and valid in NC. Core as well as non-core classes may be used, thanks to recent amendments to the NC homeschool law. (NCHE was successful in initiating and pursuing these changes in the law and getting them passed.)

The Technology

Are the classes synchronous or asynchronous?

These terms indicate the way the classes function, and the experiences are quite different. It's important to ask before signing up.

Asynchronous in essence means *not live* or not at the same time. In an asynchronous class, the assignments, tests and sometimes reading material are found in a certain *room* online, accessed only by class enrollees. The teacher posts the assignments, and the student reads the assignments and completes whatever exercises and tests the teacher requires. While the student does work at his/her own pace, in general, there are firm deadlines to be met. The students use discussion boards to hold discussions. They post a message or question and wait for people to come to the board to post responses. The teacher is usually available through email or Skype or some such medium.

Synchronous classes are *live* or at-the-same-time classes. Students and teachers meet in some kind of gathering place (virtual classroom, etc.), and the teacher conducts a live lesson. In some classes, the teacher is visible on video, and the students interact with the teacher and each other through chat, microphone and other interactions. The homework is usually handed in to the teacher using something like a Dropbox on the class website. Depending on the teacher, this synchronous format is often the one that works better for most students because it can be quite interactive.

What platform does your class/school use?

A platform is the program system that a class provider uses to get the class to your computer. This platform plays a huge role in how successful the online experience is for your student because it governs how the classroom works.

The first platform to consider is the class management system. This would be where students receive and submit assignments electronically, participate in discussions, take tests (if the tests are electronic) and find their gradebook. The two most popular online management systems are Moodle and Haiku (powered by Blackboard). Some courses operate totally within this asynchronous venue. Both of these systems are widely used in traditional schools and colleges as a means for students to access class information.

For classes that involve a live class element, there are several programs in use. Any program that allows for a live presentation of the teacher teaching and interaction between and among the students will work, though some work better than others. These platforms often have video on which the teacher is seen and some type of white board where the teacher displays Power Point type instructional slides. Some programs, like Kahn Academy, use a tablet function that allows their written or typed input to display on the computer while they talk even though the teacher may not be seen at all. I have

seen a teacher use the video teaching feature to show their white board as they worked math problems.

To accomplish this live action synchronous class, some courses use Web Ex, which is technically a virtual meeting space created for businesses. One relatively new provider is using a *meet up* feature of Google to hold class, but I haven't seen this in action. I understand that it works similar to *face time*. The most popular platform for large academic providers is BlackBoard. There are some smaller companies that provide a classroom format similar to BlackBoard in concept. The common feature among all of these is the teacher on video component at an established meeting. It is important to try out the platform if possible since quality of experience can vary. It is also important to ensure your particular computer and Internet service will support the classroom platform. Live classes, using video, consume a lot of bandwidth, and those with unreliable or weak Internet service will be frustrated.

Almost without exception among the providers we surveyed, these live action platforms are recorded for students to view at different times. Having repeated access to the lecture portion of a class is a huge benefit for many students, especially as they acclimate to taking a *real class* with notes and a teacher.

What kind of interaction is involved in classes?

One fear of parents and students is that they will be watching a video for class all the time. In the most interactive form of online classes, this is not the case. The teacher teaching is similar to a regular class except a white board projection is used rather than a chalkboard. Students communicate with the teacher in real-time through a chat feature or possibly through a microphone. In many cases the students can chat in real-time with one another and ask questions or make comments. In asynchronous classes, where all interaction is through email and discussion boards, students also interact with the teacher and each other in a less immediate or personal way.

In both cases there is a communication venue by which relationships are forged between students and teachers and also between the students themselves. The type and quality of the interactions depends a great deal on the teacher. As a parent and an online teacher, I have found that there is more relationship in synchronous classes, but even that depends how much student involvement is allowed or required. Many courses use private chat rooms with a whiteboard where

students collaborate on projects. This type of interaction builds relationship as does allowing student interaction during class. In the class I just finished teaching, after making a strong effort to get students to collaborate and discuss, I found the students had formed strong personal bonds despite being spread across the country.

What kinds of students succeed?

As a parent and a teacher I would say that most students can succeed in an online class given proper training and support. The biggest hurdle is learning the specifics of submitting assignments electronically or using other features of the course for electronic testing or projects. Students who are generally good readers and sufficient writers have no problem learning to participate, and students today are generally so tech savvy that they adapt well to the online project media, interactive games and learning activities. In fact, any student who can text on a phone can participate in class! Beyond the technology, an online class is no different from a traditional class.

What kinds of students fail?

Students who fail to learn the necessary technology will fail the class. If a student can't turn in papers or take tests on time, he will not succeed. If a family does not have the proper computer, Internet access or technology acumen, they will become frustrated and likely drop the class. Most people can learn what they need to for success, but some are unwilling to learn and overcome frustration, or unable to upgrade to a sufficient computer system.

Self-starters have a huge advantage over students who need prodding. It may be harder for distractible students to attend to and grasp all the details of the lecture, deadlines and other specific instructions. These students may be more successful with more direct contact with the instructor.

What are the pros and cons?

Cons

- A computer with reliable access is required.
- For video classes, high speed Internet is necessary. (Asynchronous classes are a possible solution.)
- Students can feel isolated.
- Some students need more hands-on, in-person instruction.
- Courses can be costly (watch for discounts).

Pros

- You save time and money, because you don't have to travel to a class.
- The pressure is off you to control everything.
- Students gain from having a teacher who may be a specialist.
- You retain some flexibility in scheduling.
- Students learn valuable classroom and life skills, including:
 - Dealing with deadlines
 - Taking notes from lectures
 - Taking tests
 - Interacting with instructors
- The competition can provide motivation.
- Online instruction has fewer distractions than a live class for some LD students.

Where do I find providers?

An Internet search of *online homeschool courses* will probably bring up more options than you can process—everything from small providers or individual instructors to large and well-organized course providers and online academies. It is a good idea to read message boards and ask for suggestions or referrals (remember that one person's bad experience might not mean the whole program is bad). The number of offerings increases each year, and the quality may vary widely between providers.

Your online search may also turn up a wide selection of free courses through several university systems. Basically, they are online course outlines that the student works through independently, and there is no teacher access. I have seen a couple that included video instruction. They might be great for the self-motivated, self-educating student, but most students prefer a more engaging interactive class format.

Summary

Online classes have opened many new options for homeschoolers to enjoy the best of both worlds. Through selective online courses families can access specialist teachers, specialty courses and topics that might not be accessible otherwise. Online classes do take some pressure off mom, and families can use the online course to ensure they don't become bogged down! Not every family will need or want the options that online courses provide, but for those families who use it, online instruction may combine the flexibility and effectiveness of homeschooling with the inspiration and motivation of a traditional classroom.



Diane Allen and her husband have homeschooled for twenty years and have just graduated their youngest child. As a "retired" homeschool mom, Diane will continue to serve the homeschool community through her testing business, speaking engagements, targeted blog and by teaching online classes with Landry Academy. She writes about homeschool topics and may be contacted at www.dallenhomeschoolreviews.com.

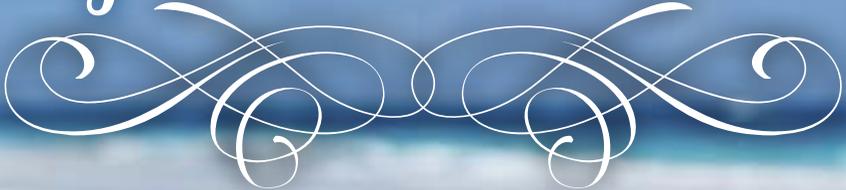


Marji McIlvaine and her husband, Rick, have homeschooled for twenty-five years and in four states. Five of their children have graduated from their homeschool—two have graduated from college, two are in college, one is in-and-out of college and their youngest daughter graduated in May. She administers the Woodcock-Johnson test in WNC, teaches with Landry Academy and BBC tutorials.

Questions to Ask an Online Provider:

- 1) Are your classes synchronous or asynchronous?
- 2) What platform do you use?
- 3) Can the students see the teacher via webcam?
- 4) How do the students interact with the teacher (and vice versa)?
- 5) How much access do the students have to the teacher?
- 6) How are assignments turned in, and scored?
- 7) If live classes are used, are there recordings? How long can the students access the recordings?
- 8) Can we experience a sample of a real class?
- 9) How do you do languages and science labs?
- 10) How do you keep my student's information and ID secure?

Why Homeschool?



by Lynda Russell

Why would anybody in their right mind homeschool their children? Why would a person with a good education not work at a job that pays? Why would an adult do without the *nice things* that money can buy: the fun vacation, the in style clothes, the better automobile? Why would a mom stay home all day (and night) preparing, teaching, grading, planning, studying, recording, etc., instead of visiting, calling and enjoying friends? Why would a person devote all of her life to teaching her own children instead of letting someone who is *trained* do it? Why would a woman who hates science teach science? Why would bug collections and frog dissections be all over a person's house? Why would a person who didn't understand old literature and poetry in college suddenly get something out of it? Why would someone with sixteen years of education and two diplomas think they had to endure fifteen (or sixteen, at the rate we're going) more years of education? *Why, I ask, why?*

My answer? I have no idea! Well, actually, I do. I know it is because God led me to do this. God gave me this job. He is my boss; I answer to Him. He provides needed materials and texts; He listens when I have concerns with my students; He guides the very words that come out of my mouth in my lessons; He reviews me and lets me know what I need to correct and pats me on the back when I get it right. And He pays me well, not as the world sees a paycheck but as heaven sees it.

One day this season will end. One day, all too soon, my children will have diplomas to verify their hard work, and I will have earned my teaching degree, yet will have no diploma to show for it. One day I'll rejoin the *work force* that earns a paycheck



(so that my children can continue their education further at a university!). I will be able to have new clothes and eat out more often. I will leave my job behind at the end of each day and will work only regular hours. Yet when that day comes, I will miss the hard work that this job has required of me. And I will look back on it and smile at all the good times we had together.

Why homeschool? God only knows! But I am so very glad He allows me to do it.

Thank you, God!



Lynda Russell has been teacher to her youngest two sons for sixteen years. This article was written earlier in her homeschooling career. She will give up this position in May at graduation, but will never give up her love for learning and for teaching. She and her husband have

five sons and two grandchildren. They have been members of NCHS since 1998. 

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$$m\vec{a} = \sum_{i=1}^n \vec{F}_i$$

$$a^2 + b^2 = c^2$$

$$S = \pi R^2$$

$$\pi = 3,1415926$$

$$2643383279 502$$

$$7510 582097494$$



by Debbie Thompson

Cognitive ability or aptitude tests attempt to measure a student's cognitive reasoning abilities. They help you know how information is learned. An achievement test measures what a student knows. A cognitive ability or aptitude test measures how well a student can process information and solve problems. The test demonstrates capability for learning and helps predict future academic success. Many public and private schools use these tests for entry into their academically gifted programs.

The most common ability tests used in homeschool are the Cognitive Abilities Test™ (CogAT®) and the Otis-Lennon School Ability Test® (OLSAT®). The CogAT is a companion product to the Iowa achievement test. The OLSAT is a companion to the Stanford achievement test. Though the CogAT can be ordered independently from the Iowa test, the OLSAT paper version usually is ordered when ordering the Stanford test. The OLSAT8 Online test can be done on your computer any time of year, independent of the Stanford Online test.

The CogAT can be administered for grades 2 (must be at least eighty-one months old) through grade 12. The test consists of three parts: a verbal battery, a non-verbal battery, and a quantitative battery. The levels for the CogAT are:

Level A: grades 2 and 3

Level B: grade 4

Level C: grade 5

Level D: grade 6

Level E: grade 7

Level F: grades 8, 9

Level G: grades 10, 11

Level H: grade 12

(A very few gifted programs might use CogATs for Gr K and 1.)

The OLSAT can also be administered beginning in grade 2 and through grade 12. It consists of two sections, a verbal and a non-verbal section. The levels for the OLSAT are:

Level C: grade 2

Level D: grade 3

Level E: grades 4, 5

Level F: grades 6–8

Level G: grades 9–12

(A very few gifted programs might use OLSATs for Gr K and 1.)

Test Format: Paper or Online:

Paper: CogAT Gr 2-12

Paper: OLSAT: Gr 2-12

Online: OLSAT: Grade 3 Spring-12

Test Length:

The CogAT is ninety minutes of working time. (The total testing time with instructions and a break is approximately 145 minutes.)

The OLSAT is exactly forty minutes of working time. (The total testing time with instructions and a break is approximately sixty minutes.)

Test Administration Requirements:

The publishers of the CogAT and the paper version of the OLSAT require the test administrator to have at least a bachelor's degree in order to administer the test. (NC law allows parents to administer these to their children, if they abide by the publisher's rules and instructions.)

The OLSAT8 Online test does not require the parent have a bachelor's degree since the testing company is administering the assessment.

Extra Report with the CogAT:

The CogAT scores can be input into an interactive website which then gives you an instructional strategies report. This report can be very helpful to your understanding how to teach to your child's learning style, strengths, and weaknesses.

Quickest Results:

OLSAT Online: immediately or within forty-eight hours.



CogAT hand scoring option (an additional fee): results in one week.

CogAT machine scoring: a couple of weeks.

Group Testing:

CogAT: all levels may test together.

OLSAT: Levels E through G (grades 4-12) may test together.

While the CogAT and OLSAT tests measure cognitive ability, in NC, a true IQ test must be supervised by a licensed psychologist. The most commonly used IQ tests are the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, (also known as the WISC test), the Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Cognitive Abilities and the Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children. These tests allow you to assess if your child is working at, below or above their ability. They usually cost quite a bit more than the CogAT or OLSAT but yield information concerning short term memory, long term memory, cognitive fluency, visual-auditory learning, spatial relations and more. They help diagnose learning differences, and are used in developing IEP or 504 plans for testing accommodations or modifications.



Debbie Thompson (www.TriangleEd.com) is director at Triangle Education Assessments in Apex, NC, which helps thousands of homeschoolers each year with their achievement, cognitive, college credit, career and practice testing needs. For questions, email TEA at info@

triangleed.com or call (877) 843-8837.





A Letter to Me — Circa 2009 —

by Laura Saufley

I've been homeschooling since 2009 when my oldest daughter was in the second grade, my middle daughter was three years old, and I was pregnant with my third daughter. I wish I had known then what I know now. If I could go back to 2009, here's what I'd tell myself.

Hey there, you. So you are thinking about homeschooling, huh? Well before you make such a huge decision, you need to know the truth about homeschooling.

1. It will be hard. Actually, hard is an understatement. There will be days when you want to call the public school and see what time the bus can pick up your children. There will be days when you can't stop crying. Some days, you will text Aaron multiple times explaining why you can no longer homeschool. There will be days when you just want to give up.

2. Say goodbye to your free time. It will be non-existent. Remember those days of dropping Annagrace off at school and Madalyn at preschool and spending the days doing whatever you wanted? You can kiss those days goodbye. Your days will now be consumed with multiplication tables, phonics, history facts, messy art projects and playing chauffeur. Spending a day alone with no children will be a rare luxury.

3. Homeschooling will take over your house. Remember your clean, beautifully decorated home? I don't. You will have history timelines on the living room wall, science projects brewing in the kitchen, books scattered in every room of the house and the laundry—oh, the laundry! There will be clutter; you will rarely have a day without a sink full of dishes, and home projects will take three times as long to complete as usual. You will have less storage space (because it will be taken over by homeschool curriculum), and your crafts and scrapbooking room will be renamed *the schoolroom*.

4. Family nights will take on a whole new meaning.

Your family nights will turn into *finish up the schoolwork that we didn't complete during the day* nights. History lessons will become the subject of your supper time conversation. Movie time will often be a documentary about the ocean or some historical figure. Night time stories will no longer be about Barbie but will be about King James and Pocahontas and John Cabot (wait, maybe that's not such a bad thing).

But more than anything, I need you to know this:

5. Homeschooling will enrich your life.

Because there will be no greater joy than hearing your child read for the first time—and realizing that you were the one who taught her how.

Because God will use homeschooling to teach you about grace, patience, sacrifice and perseverance on a daily basis.

Because you will appreciate the daily newness of God's mercies more than you ever have before.

Because you will blink and your children will be taller than you and maybe even a little smarter than you. They will grow up in an instant. And despite the difficulty, the tears, the arguments and the lack of free time you will realize that every single second spent with your child has been worth it.

So self, forget the naysayers. Forget that little voice inside telling you that you can't do this, that you aren't smart enough, that you don't have the patience for this. Forget that certain public school teacher who thinks that you can't possibly teach your children because you don't have an official teaching degree. Forget all the people saying your children are not going to be *socialized*. Forget them all and rest in the knowledge that if Jesus led you to this, He will see you through this.

Homeschooling will change your life, and for that, you will forever be grateful.



Laura and her husband, Aaron, are the proud parents of three girls: Annagrace, Madalyn and Layla. They have been homeschooling since 2009. Laura works part-time as a hospice nurse and is the founder and coach of Girls Run Miles, a local homeschooled girls running group. Her passion is in pursuing a healthier lifestyle for her family and encouraging other families to do the same. She blogs at SimplyHealthyMama.com.

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Remembering Fortitude: The Life and Methods of Charlotte Mason

by Lindsey Narmour

It's that time of year. Suddenly you no longer care about the Cheerios on the floor, the workbooks begging for attention in their little pile, or how many Latin verbs your teenager can conjugate. You have reached the end of the school year, and despite how many unchecked tasks

and goals may remain on your monthly planner, nature is telling you to pause and seek renewal. Every morning hums with bees rustling in your tomato patch, the sunrise comes earlier and earlier with an orange haze creeping through full, lush trees, and bunnies scatter in the dewy grass, hoping no one notices the little chunks chewed out of the lettuce. Or maybe you rise to the refreshing smell of an automatic coffeemaker and the roar of traffic underneath your window!

Summer has come, and it's time to rethink your homeschool trajectory. You might be feeling exhausted from the year, overwhelmed at the range of curriculum choices for next year, perhaps even uncertain whether homeschooling is still right for your children. You're just plain bushed, and you need some inspiration, so I am going to give you a little art lesson and tell you about a lady who has had a big impact on modern homeschooling methods. I hope this will give you some inspiration for the coming school year.

Miss Mason: Her Life

Sandro Botticelli was an Italian painter, one of the greatest artists during the Renaissance, who received his first paid commission to paint the likeness of Fortitude,

one of the seven virtues, for a panel in the sunny city of Florence, Italy. It was in this marvelous city, filled to the brim with laughter, artistic Easter eggs in every corner and warm, restoring light that Charlotte Mason encountered the painting “Fortitude” while she was visiting with friends. You can just imagine Charlotte as a young girl, her lovely dark hair done in a pert bun, tattered notebook firmly clutched in both thin hands as she tried to recreate the marvelous painting in her sketchbook. You can see her tracing the thoughtful mouth of Fortitude, a grand lady draped in milky blues and earthy browns, wearing a rich crimson cloak and cradling a heavy scepter in both hands as she sits staring at something the painting deliciously refuses to reveal.

The painting that Charlotte saw in Florence and its image of feminine strength and endurance in the face of hardships was something she carried with her back to London, where she attended the first teacher training school in England, the Home and Colonial School Society. Here Charlotte began her study of educational theories and began searching for alternatives to the often dreary methodology of mass education. She was encouraged by her own tutors to take walks on the shires and observe nature, to read meaty books that went beyond French verbs or math problems and to develop good habits, not simply good grades.

Born in 1842 in Bangor, Wales, Charlotte was the daughter of a dry-salter, a merchant dealing in salt and preserved foods; her mother struggled with feeble health, and little Charlotte was orphaned around age seventeen. Charlotte moved to London to stay with friends and attended the Home and Colonial School Society. She obtained a certificate to teach and became headmistress at The Davison School, one of the first nursery-infant schools studying methods of teaching young children. Charlotte continued this determined track, studying educational methodology and teaching at a ladies’ high school, training young women to become educators, until chronic pain and illness forced her to slow down at age twenty-nine.

Charlotte found it necessary to summon her vivid memory of her encounter with Botticelli’s “Fortitude” years after she had visited Florence. Even though she seemed young and hearty to those who knew her, Charlotte had to again quit teaching after a short respite proved to be insufficient for her healing. She took advantage of her time off, traveling around the English countryside and keeping

notes in one of her ever-present journals, detailing the woods and mountains she observed, sketching them in her journal and eventually writing enough descriptions to amass a geography book called *The Forty Shires*, which she published in 1880.

Charlotte knew God was watching out for her even in her time of illness for the profits of her geography book were so great that she was able to move permanently to London. Once situated, she began lecturing to local parents interested in teaching their children at home. Her venture into the public arena came about when her vicar approached her about donating to a new parish. Since she was shy of the necessary funds for a donation, Charlotte offered to give a series of lectures on education instead, basing them off what she had learned during her years in teacher training school. Charlotte developed connections with the parents and became fast friends with their children through her series of expository lectures, which she would later compile to form *Home Education*, the first of her popular—and since republished—books on homeschooling, which you, yourself, may have read.

Seeing the keen interest her attendees had for her lectures and new methods of homeschooling, Charlotte formed the Parents’ Educational Union which took off in popularity and reached a continually widening audience of parents wishing to homeschool their children. In 1892, at age fifty, Charlotte opened the House of Education in Springfield, Ambleside, a training college for women seeking to teach just as she, herself, had done as a young woman. Charlotte continued to work at the House of Education and correspond with parents until her death in 1923, just after celebrating her eighty-first birthday.

Charlotte lived a full life, touching those around her and bringing new methods into her classroom, which was not limited to four walls and a chalkboard but stretched to rivers and woods, shires and valleys, muddy pools and mossy banks. Despite an ongoing struggle with chronic pain and the recognition she was often denied because she was an unmarried female educator, Charlotte kept the image of Fortitude in her mind. She wrote in her personal journal that she knew God was caring for her and that He would have her carry on with fortitude in the face of pain or incredulity.

The Three Pillars of Charlotte Mason Education

The method of education that Charlotte promoted

is constructed around three convictions which she lays out in her series of homeschooling books: education is an atmosphere, a discipline and a life. These tenets summarize her philosophy not just about education but about the importance of character in a child which must be established at an early age to continue into adulthood.

By *atmosphere*, Charlotte means that a child must be surrounded by an atmosphere and given resources to fuel his intellectual growth and encourage his curiosity. Charlotte was impatient with education's usual practice of using rote memorization to recall facts and figures, and she disparaged books of poor quality, berating them as *twaddle*, preferring instead good books that taught character and truth, the very things her other areas of education would be reinforcing. Hallmarks of an atmosphere of education include nature walks where a child could observe God's creation firsthand, hands-on learning allowing for mistakes and independent discovery about the particulars of science or mathematics and a learning experience expanding beyond the child's penknife-marked desk.

Charlotte's second pillar, *discipline*, refers to her strong belief in the development of good habits and character qualities, even in young children. Whenever

she was given care of children, she made sure that they had regular meals, healthy exercise every day, a consistent bedtime and hours of study balanced with hours of play. Charlotte was adamant that good habits, politeness, honesty and kindness to others would carry a child far, and if the literature read during school time taught these same lessons, so much the better!

The third and final pillar, *life*, is the concept that all of life is an education with boundless opportunities to be taught from a wellspring of wisdom found in every area of life but especially nature, conversation and the arts. If given the atmosphere to explore these things and the discipline to realize the importance of attentiveness to

details and a healthy craving to learn more, a child will rise to the occasion. Their inherent desire to gain knowledge and relate to their world will fashion their entire education into a lifestyle that seems as natural as getting out of bed in the morning, breathing in a good smell or enjoying the sweet words of a well-written book.

Back to Your Life

You might find yourself reading this, however, and thinking morosely that Charlotte's pillars might have been nice things to write down, good in theory, but extremely hard and even impossible in practice. How does one implement her pillars in the face of unmotivated kids, a messy house that isn't an encouraging place to be, much less an educational environment, or demanding schedules

that require your attention to be divided among a dozen tasks at once?

First, remember, it's summer now—take a deep breath and be gracious with yourself! You have reached the end of the school year, and it's time to put away the planner, collect your thoughts and pray about direction. The beauty found in Charlotte's methodology is that it's actually not so difficult to integrate into a normal school day. It can work just as well with one child as it can with



twelve, with a student who is raring to go every morning as well as a student who would rather be off doing his own thing. As for the messy house, put it in perspective and relax because in the grand scheme, it won't make a difference to a child who looks back on their homeschool experience and fondly thinks about the effort and attention their parents put into *educating* them, not frantically picking up everything that falls on the floor. The time it takes to sit down and read a book aloud together, find Hungary on a map together instead of leaving the child to fend for himself or make hardtack after studying the Revolutionary War is indeed time well-spent, and the hands-on approach to learning will draw in reluctant students.

The purpose of a Charlotte Mason education is not to have the perfect school day, have a host of fun projects each week or even to have fun every moment while learning but rather to challenge the sleeping forces of curiosity, intellect and responsiveness in a child to do great things. Ultimately, all those cooking projects, nature walks with journals in hand or afternoons laughing over pronouncing French verbs aloud together are meant to bring honor to God, the Creator of education, nature and curiosity.

You might find that distractions too often get in your way: you can't think of a single hands-on project to do, your garden is wilting under the frying summer sun, bad news and scandalous stories cry for attention from headlines and pulpits. When you start feeling this overwhelming sense of distraction, dissension and perhaps even failure, remember the dark-haired girl in Florence staring with an open, wondering mouth, her eyes transfixed on "Fortitude." Charlotte recognized the necessity of having fortitude in her own life, and unarguably it is necessary in the homeschooling experience. If you are convicted that homeschooling is your calling, that it is right for your family,

then distractions and troubling news will unquestionably come your way. However, God gives fortitude to faithful servants who are willing to press on to unveil richness in education that few people are patient and determined enough to find. Cultivating fortitude does not depend on whether or not your child loves learning, whether or not you live surrounded by nature, whether or not you're following the Charlotte Mason style of education. Fortitude is what you must have regardless of these things. It is the determination to press on and the strength God rewards to such an act of faith.



Lindsey Narmour is a homeschool graduate and the author of several books in the Discovering Nature Series, published by Queen Homeschool Supplies. Lindsey received her A.A. in liberal arts from Virginia Western Community College and is now pursuing a B.A. in English at Hollins University.

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What if the Art Teacher Taught Math?



by Courtney Sanford

My thirteen-year-old daughter Ellie was participating in a mock trial event, so we took a field trip, along with several moms and teenagers, to visit a courthouse and watch a real trial. As we waited for the trial to begin, the sheriff talked with the students. He was very enthusiastic about the justice system and was happy to answer any questions we asked. At one point, however, he turned to the moms and asked us if we had been teachers before we started homeschooling our children. (This did not feel like small talk anymore. It felt as though he were checking our qualifications.) I was grateful that my friend was quick with her reply that she had been a teacher; in fact, she had taught criminal justice at a university. The sheriff was, of course, completely satisfied that she was qualified to homeschool, and they had plenty to talk about after that, so I did not have to give my answer.

I did not want to say that I had been an art teacher. From his reaction, I assumed the sheriff would think that an art teacher ought not to be teaching government, literature and especially math! If we had had more time, I would have liked to explain homeschooling more fully, pointing out that teaching credentials and college degrees are not necessary for parents to produce well-educated students.

I have given this some thought since then, and I have come to the conclusion that perhaps more art teachers should teach math. I come to math class, or any class, knowing *how to learn*, and I learn with my children. I have come to believe that this is the most important thing we can teach our children: how to learn. When I teach math or any other subject that I'm not an expert in, I model how to learn.

I am currently reading a beautiful book about math titled *Mathematics, Is God Silent?* The author, James Nickel, just might like the idea that the art teacher is teaching math.

He explains that many students dislike math because it is taught so abstractly that we do not see the relationship of math to creation. Math, he explains, is the language that describes and explains creation and helps us understand and know the Creator a bit better. As the art teacher, I can easily see this. The leaves on a branch either follow an alternating or opposite pattern. Flowers have radial symmetry. A five petal flower has the same structure as a pentagram. A sand dollar also reflects a pentagram. All animals, including humans, were created with symmetry, and therefore, all will have an even number of legs.

I can show and explain to my students the golden rectangle and its spiral and how the ratio of one side of the rectangle to its other side is the same ratio in a pinecone, a sunflower seed and a nautilus shell. These elements found in creation beautifully demonstrate math concepts: pattern, symmetry, geometry, ratios. Once I start to see the math in creation, not only can I not deny the existence of the Creator, but I am astounded at His great wisdom. He not only invented these complicated math concepts; He also instructs flowers and pinecones to grow following these complex patterns. He arranged things we cannot even see in complex and beautiful mathematical patterns, like the double helix of DNA. And He did not just place those things in mathematical arrangements; He caused them to grow into those complex patterns. The pinecone grows in a ratio that I have trouble calculating. This does not mean the pinecone is smarter than I am. It means that God is smarter than I am. Way smarter. He has hidden complex mysteries in biology, chemistry and physics, and when we learn math, *really learn math*, we can understand the complexities behind something that at first glance seems simple. The movement of a planet across the sky, for example, demands an understanding of ellipses, time, distance and relative motion.

I believe that human beings have only scratched the surface of the mathematics of creation. That is why we

should study math. We need to know the language of math in order to discover, and further appreciate, more of the beauty, complexity and greatness of God.

I never had a math teacher who showed me this. A homeschool mom did. Imagine that. God does not call the equipped to homeschool. He equips those who are called. Therefore, the question asked of us by so many, "Are you qualified?" is not really relevant. The question is, "Can God equip you to do this?" If you know anything about pinecones or sea shells, then you know that, yes, God is *more than (>)* capable of equipping me to teach math or art or, more importantly, to raise a child who knows how to learn

anything and is completely in awe of God.



Courtney Sanford is the wife of Chris and has been homeschooling their three children for the last nine years. She grew up in Sanford, NC, and now lives in Raleigh. She loves reading, traveling and helping with choreography in their local Christian Youth Theatre. She has a degree in graphic design from the School of Design at NCSU, and she is the creative director for Classical Conversations, Inc.

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Prioritizing Motherhood

by Tanya Dickens

While homeschooling is full of variety, with its unexpected and daily drama, it can also become chaotic and overwhelming for some. Much like striving to achieve and maintain a successful career, both can take a toll on you. For some women, either of these pursuits outside of God's purpose and plan can lead to a sense of worthlessness, regret and frustration. If left unchecked, these feelings can transition into varied levels of depression. Once we become mothers, however, I believe that God intends for us to prioritize motherhood and to see it as our calling to disciple our children to become future sons and daughters of God. For all of my adolescence and young adulthood, I believed that I could be a successful business woman and mother at the same time, and nobody could have convinced me otherwise. Now that I have matured and become a mother, I see how important it is for us as women to prioritize motherhood and to see it as God's calling and purpose for our lives.

I was in my late thirties when my husband and I began the process of adopting our first two children, ages one and two, in 2007. At the time we began the adoption process, I owned two businesses that consumed my time and energy during most of my waking hours. Between managing the businesses' overhead, networking, marketing, hiring and managing employees, stroking clients and improving my



skill set, I have no idea how I had time to be a wife. I guess it helped that my husband was equally as busy. I lived to succeed in my profession. Not only was I driven by accessing financial wealth, I desired to be world renowned in my profession.

Once I became a mom, however, my drive to acquire wealth and worldwide fame decreased drastically. I made a lot of money owning my businesses, significantly more than my husband, so despite this decrease in my motivation, I attempted to juggle my life as a wife, mother and business owner for a while. Why couldn't I do it all, I asked myself? I have known other women who were successful business owners, wives and mothers. I've read about many, many more. If they could do it, so could I! I've always believed in working smarter and not harder, so I found the best daycare we could afford that was close to my work, and I dropped the children off in the morning while my husband picked them up in the evening.

After approximately a year of three different daycares, we now had two children who during their eight to nine hours a day in daycare Monday through Friday were forgetting everything that we had taught them on the weekend. As I assessed this situation, I discovered that my children were spending more of their waking hours in daycare than they were spending with me and my husband. I thought about taking the children to work with me, but I knew that when I was at work, my work demanded and received my full and undivided attention. So taking the children to work not an option, and my husband's job would

not allow him to care for them at work either. I had a choice to make, but when I really thought about, it wasn't a hard choice. So, I made it. I made the decision to prioritize being a mother. I walked away from my career and my profession to become a full-time mother and homeschooler, and I never looked back.

Former clients and some of my friends have asked me if I miss being a business owner, and I tell them very honestly, "No, I don't." Being a full-time mother and homeschooler has given me a much more fulfilling life than being a successful business owner. Sure, I impacted people's lives as a business owner and as an employer, but it's not nearly as rewarding as impacting the lives of my children. In reflecting back on my life and the choices I made to leave my career and then shortly thereafter to begin homeschooling, it is clear to me that God called me to be a mother in 2007. I just didn't know in 2007 that accepting that call would lead me to leave my career and profession in order to fully pursue this call of motherhood. In accepting this call, however, I

have received benefits and rewards that I never dreamed of or thought possible from being *just* a mother. I have a wonderful relationship with all four of my children. Homeschooling my four children has allowed our whole family to grow closer together faster than by sending them to

school while my husband and I worked during the day. We have been able to identify each of our children's unique spiritual gifts and develop means and methods to help develop these gifts early in their educational disciplines. We have been able to



educate them in a Christian environment, which is extremely important to us, and best of all, our children, all under the age of ten years old, are happy, well-adjusted and poised to become productive citizens in society. My husband is also reaping the benefits of my decision to prioritize motherhood as well. He likes home-cooked meals and desserts, and he loves having a wife that feels that she is fulfilling her calling and purpose in life. He works very hard to make sure that nothing, absolutely nothing, gets in the way of my desire to fulfill my calling.

I understand that my decision is not right for every woman. I understand that many women desire to have a career outside of the home in addition to being a mother. But I have spoken with a lot of women, and I have read the stories of others, and these women often feel conflicted about their choice to continue pursuing their professional careers during motherhood. They want to spend more time mothering, but they are scared that they will lose a part of themselves if they don't maintain their careers. They feel guilty, because they can't be there for their children to do many of the things they would like to do, but they believe that the income from their careers is critical to their family's survival. If you are a woman

striving to "have it all," and you feel conflicted about the choices you are making, I want to encourage you to think about prioritizing motherhood in your life because deciding to shift my time and energy from work to my two beautiful daughters was the absolute best decision I could have made. At the time, I knew very little about homeschooling, and I never thought it was for me, but now seven years later, we have four kids that are reaping the benefits of my decision to leave my career and become a homeschool mother.

I'm also not saying that there aren't women who can *do it all or have it all*, I'm just saying that I couldn't do it, and maybe, just maybe, you can't either. You see, I had to admit to myself that as good as I was, and even as good as I thought I was, I could not "do it all" and do everything equally as well. Somebody or something was going to get less of my attention, and in my experience, things that get less of my attention aren't as successful as the things that get more of it. I could not keep all of my many plates spinning equally as fast at the same time, and spinning any of the plates slower was the same as breaking one. I don't believe that I am the only mother who has felt this way. In fact, I've read that even the



mothers who *have it all* feel this way at times. They, of course, pressed through these feelings to come out on the other side. But I wonder what it feels like to be on the other side. Does being on the other side mean that you accept the fact that you can't be there for everyone at the same time? Do you accept that doing your best is good enough despite the results? Does it mean that everyone is happy and accepting of the reality that there are times when you simply are not going to be available for them. I wonder because I know how success felt when I prioritized my businesses, and I know what success feels like when I prioritized motherhood. For me, prioritizing motherhood has been much more fulfilling, and I am absolutely certain that our family would not be and could not be what it is today, if I had continued trying to maintain my career during motherhood.

I think this quote from Christine Caine says it best: "I have found that knowing who and what I'm not is as important to keeping me on track with my purpose and calling as knowing who and what I am!" If you are a mother, you must ask yourself "Who and what are you not?" What is God's purpose for your life as a mother? Has God really called any mother to prioritize her ambitions, career or even her self-fulfillment over motherhood? Hasn't God called us to disciple our children and to take up our cross, deny ourselves and follow Him? For those of you who are conflicted about pursuing outside careers during motherhood and for those of you who wonder whether choosing to prioritize motherhood is enough, I want to encourage you to view motherhood as a career path designed by the hand of God. When we put God first and His righteousness, he has promised to add all of the things we had previously been seeking—honor, status and fulfillment. It may not come in the ways we expect it, but when it does come, it will be more satisfying than we have ever experienced.

Now, when I wake up in the morning, instead

of focusing on how much money I need to make that day or that week, I feel energized to make a difference in my children's lives, and when I go to bed at night, instead of worrying how tomorrow will be, I lie down exhausted knowing everything I endured during the day was worth it, and most days, I look forward to doing it all over again the next morning. After experiencing both career and motherhood, I can't imagine a more valuable trade off than prioritizing motherhood over career, choosing an eternal purpose over a temporary one.



Tanya and James Dickens have been married for over fifteen years. *They both were workaholics driven by the possibilities of building an empire. Tanya had told James that if he was looking for a stay at home wife, she wasn't the one. However, God had a completely different idea of success for their lives. After nearly ten years of marriage, they decided to adopt a child, but God thought it better that they adopt two. One year and three preschools later, homeschooling became the perfect solution for the Dickens family. They are now the parents of four. Tanya serves on the NCHE board as treasurer.*



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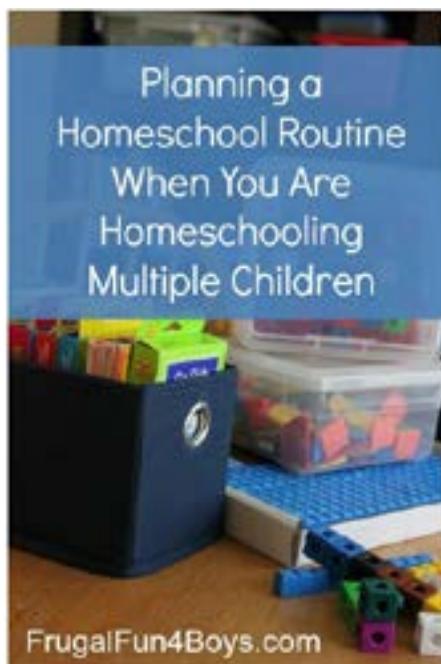
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SURVEYING THE SITES

by Lorie Codispoti

We've been busy surveying the Internet for websites that you will enjoy. Our goal is to provide something for everyone so we've organized these fun, informative, and educational websites into four categories. Have fun exploring!



Articles of Interest

"Planning a Homeschool Routine When You Are Homeschooling Multiple Children" by Sarah Dees

<http://frugalfun4boys.com/2013/08/07/planning-a-homeschool-routine-when-you-are-homeschooling-multiple-children/>

"I try to keep a structure going, but sometimes (often?) my house looks like a circus. It's definitely a challenge to keep everyone on track, and I do not do a perfect job!" (SD)

"Stepping Outside the Grade Level Box" by Sarah Small

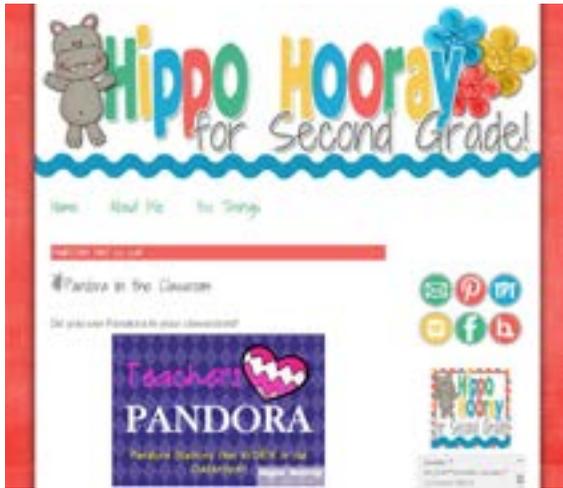
<http://simplehomeschool.net/stepping-outside-the-grade-level-box/>

"... shedding our mental checklist of 'what your child should know in each grade' can be liberating—and tremendously beneficial to our kids." (SS)

Teacher Feature

Pandora in the Classroom

<http://hippohoorayforsecondgrade.blogspot.com/2014/05/pandora-in-classroom.html?m=0>



Pandora is a free website that allows you to stream music, and this homeschool mom has put together a great list of instrumental stations that she uses for background sound during school. She has even put together stations whose music matches what they are studying. Great idea!

A Mother-Daughter Reading Club

<http://www.bjupresshomeschool.com/content/article-mother-daughter-reading-club#>.

UF4Xqoul4Kk.pinterest

What a great idea! Whether you are a reluctant reader or a book worm the idea of a book club with all your friends gathered to enjoy lively conversation might appeal to you. Plus, in a club setting, you may find that you enjoy reading books that you wouldn't have otherwise chosen.

It's Elementary

Boredom Busters for Kids

<http://www.growingajeweledrose.com/2013/09/boredom-busters-for-kids.html>

Keeping kids actively engaged when the weather keeps you indoors is quite the challenge. This site has twenty-five ideas that will bust boredom's bubble and keep everyone entertained for a while. I can't wait to try the balloon badminton. Which one do you like?

Thirty-Two Scavenger Hunt Ideas for Kids to Do

<http://handsonaswegrow.com/32-ways-kids-can-go-on-scavenger-hunts/>

If you have a collection of colored pom-poms, plastic numbers, toys, coins, nature objects, photographs or other things, then you've got the makings of a fabulous scavenger hunt. Check out these fun scavenger hunt variations the whole family will enjoy.



High School and Beyond

American History Living Books

<http://www.livingandlearningathome.com/2013/02/american-history-living-books-free-on.html>

If you have a Kindle, or even an app on another device, you can access this free collection of American history books. Make sure you scroll to the bottom of the website for links to other free history books.

Teach with Movies

<http://www.teachwithmovies.org/world-history-3.html>

Along with more than 390 learning guides, Teach with Movies has carefully selected feature films that will supplement your curriculum and enhance your students' education. Their material is well organized and includes movies appropriate for every grade level. They even have a special section just for homeschoolers.

Note: Ideas and opinions expressed on the websites in this column are not necessarily those of the author or NCHC.



Lorie Codispoti is retired from homeschooling after successfully graduating her two children. She and her husband, John, are former NCHC board members. Lorie can be reached at GatesOfEllore@gmail.com.

SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS ANNOUNCED



by Amanda Wares



Amanda Wares makes her home in Greensboro with her husband, Michael and four children, ages four to seventeen. The Wares have homeschooled for nine years. Amanda is the newly elected NCHE activities director.

“Learning is not attained by chance. It must be sought for with ardor and attended to with diligence.” Abigail Adams

As I read through the twenty applications for the scholarships to be awarded by NCHE this year, I was impressed by both the ardor and diligence that was displayed by each and every applicant. It is truly amazing what these students accomplish! Each year, I wish that we could award a scholarship to every applicant, because they all are incredible examples of homeschooling at its best.

The NCHE scholarship is a \$1,000 one-time award that is provided by NCHE member donations. Each year, two students are chosen for their academic achievement, leadership ability, character and initiative. Molly Fox and Allie Raner are this year’s winners of the NCHE award. Molly, daughter of Greg and Missy Fox of Raleigh, plans to attend Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, majoring in English or humanities with a double minor in music and Christian studies. Alexandra Raner, daughter of Greg and Debra Raner of Summerfield, is going to attend Liberty University to pursue her dream of becoming a large animal veterinarian.

The HINTS scholarship, provided each year by the HINTS support group in Charlotte, is a \$2,000 one-time award. In addition to the criteria listed for the NCHE scholarship, HINTS award winners must also be active members of their local homeschool support group. This year’s HINTS scholarship winner is Grace Garner. Grace is the daughter of Laird and Amy Garner of Winston-Salem. She plans to attend the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill as a Johnston scholar in the honors program. She intends to double-major in political science and chemistry.

The NCHE board congratulates Molly, Allie and Grace! May God richly bless them as they follow His leading in their lives! 



Molly Fox



Grace Garner



Allie Raner

BULLETIN BOARD

Thirty-First NCHE Annual Conference and Book Fair will be May 21-23, 2015, at the M.C. Benton Convention Center in Winston-Salem, NC.

Conference Recordings. MP3s of conference sessions are available on the NCHE website, nche.com, under the NCHE store link, for just \$4 each. **They will be available until July 20.**

NCHE Moms' Retreat with Sally Clarkson. NCHE has organized a moms' retreat to encourage and recharge homeschool moms. There is limited space so reserve your spot early. It will be on Wrightsville Beach, September 19-20. For more information go to nche.com and follow the link to the moms' retreat page.

4-H Spotlight Article. The annual 4-H student achievement article will be featured in the fall issue of GREENHOUSE. If your student would like to be included, send specifics (county, age division and interest/subject and parents' names) to nche@nche.com by August 1. The students' families must be NCHE members to be included.

GREENHOUSE Online. GREENHOUSE articles are made freely available online. Users may access a digital version (PDF) of the magazine in its entirety at nche.com. Users may also enjoy a mid-week update every Wednesday as NCHE makes one article from the current volume available in an online readable format at greenhouse.nche.com.

Email addresses wanted. Since NCHE uses email for much of its communication, we need your email addresses to stay in touch. If you would like to receive our weekly emails, you can go online to nche.com and sign up for the weekly email.

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GREENHOUSE (ISSN 2169-916X) is the periodical of North Carolinians for Home Education. It is a quarterly—four regular issues, plus a bonus graduate issue. It is mailed to subscribers and posted online. The name GREENHOUSE was chosen to represent the type of care homeschooling parents are able to give to their children. Children are lovingly “tended” in a protected and nurturing environment until they are sufficiently mature to go out and take a place of service in the world. Letters and articles addressed to the GREENHOUSE become property of NCHE with full right to publication without further permission required. Ideas and opinions expressed in letters and articles do not necessarily represent those of NCHE.

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Winter - Jan/Feb/Mar	Nov 20	Dec 1
Spring - Apr/May/June	Feb 20	Mar 1
Summer - Jul/Aug/Sep	May 20	Jun 1
Fall - Oct/Nov/Dec	Aug 20	Sep 1

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North Carolina Homeschool History

Although home education is the oldest form of education, it was not officially recognized in North Carolina until a Supreme Court decision in 1985 ruled that a homeschool could operate under the existing private school law. Through the efforts of concerned members of North Carolinians for Home Education, a bill was passed in 1988 that specifically named home education as an alternative for complying with compulsory school attendance requirements.

About NCHE

Our purpose is to protect the freedom to educate at home, to provide encouragement and support to families choosing home education for their children and to promote home education as an excellent educational alternative. Since its beginning in 1984, NCHE has grown from a few pioneering families to a statewide association of home educators that promotes home education and supports home educators. NCHE is governed by a working board of directors who volunteer their time and efforts to represent homeschoolers in every part of the state. A non-profit organization, NCHE operates on the basis of biblical principles and living faith. NCHE welcomes members of all races and religions.

NCHE Membership

Membership in NCHE is available to all residents of North Carolina who pledge to uphold the ideals of NCHE and comply with the North Carolina homeschool law. Membership is obtained by donating any amount to NCHE (suggested donation is \$25). The service of NCHE is made possible by the generous and consistent contributions of its supporters. The NCHE ideals are: educational excellence, parental authority and responsibility for education, protection and promotion of the family, diligence in moral and ethical instruction, responsible citizenship, freedom of choice among educational alternatives, and defense of constitutional rights.

I AM APOLOGIA SCIENCE

"Since high school, I have been involved in multiple research projects. My scientific pursuits have ranged from biofuels work in Denmark to computer simulations in New York. I've presented at multiple conferences, including one at Stanford University. This past summer, I participated in a Department of Energy-sponsored nuclear chemistry program at Brookhaven National Lab. Through all these experiences, my basic knowledge and passion stems from my education with Apologia Science."

Kyle Hancock
College student



Read an interview with Kyle by scanning this QR code.



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Thank goodness I was
never sent to school; it
would have rubbed off
some of the originality.

— *Helen Beatrix Potter* —

