

GREENHOUSE

Nurturing Home Education in North Carolina and Beyond



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Ken Robinson

DEADLINES

ISSUE DATE	ARTICLES	ADS
Fall – <i>September</i>	July 20	July 31
Spring – <i>March</i>	January 20	January 31
Graduate – <i>May</i>	March 20	March 31

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Helping Teens Develop Their Own Convictions

by Matthew McDill

My sixteen-year-old son and I were having a catch-up session when he informed me that he was interested in dating someone. He was bracing himself for my reply because he knew that most likely I would not encourage him to enter a dating relationship at this point in his life. As the conversation progressed, the dynamics of the decision became clear: he wanted to date a young lady, and he had to figure out how to convince me or get around my view of it. When I realized this, I asked him what he would do if I said, "Go for it!" I also asked him if he had prayed about this and what he thought God wanted him to do. At first he thought that if I didn't oppose him, he would date her. But then he realized that he wasn't sure it was the right thing to do.

It was helpful for me to temporarily remove myself from the process so that he could work through his own convictions. I want him to wrestle with God about it instead of me. What he wants to do or what I want him to do should be secondary considerations. What really matters is what God wants him to do.

I told him that I had no interest in managing his life. My ultimate goal is to help him learn how to follow Christ. So I suggested that this situation was a great opportunity for us to talk about how to seek the Lord and pray about these types of things. I am thankful that my son responded with eagerness to engage in that process with me. We had reset the entire conversation. I was no longer the roadblock to his agenda, resulting in arguing and conflict. Instead, I was appealing to his desire to follow the Lord and functioning as his coach in doing so.

I have often made the mistake of pitting my conviction against my teen's desires. When they really want something, this turns into conflict. When they are lazy or passive, they just go along with whatever dad thinks. Either way, my teens are robbed of the opportunity to practice their own discernment of what is right and wrong. The author of Hebrews states it this way:

“But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.” (Hebrews 5:14)

Many young people end up leaving their home without having the opportunity to learn to seek the Lord, understand His Word, and develop their own convictions. As a result they are at a great and dangerous disadvantage.

So how will I proceed in my conversation with my son? Over time, I have developed a set of principles for seeking the Lord and understanding how He is leading me. I’m going to go over these with him. If you are or will be parenting teens, I encourage you to try to articulate biblical principles about discerning God’s will when you talk with your kids. If you want a jump start on thinking through that, you can find my principles in chapter 12 of my book, *Loving God: A Practical Handbook for Discipleship*. Here are some questions I suggest:

- Am I willing to follow God’s will in this matter, even if it is not what I want to do?
- What scriptural principles are relevant to this question? Do I need to study more on this subject?
- Have I spent significant time in prayer seeking God about this question?
- Have I worked through any feelings of pressure or impatience? Will I wait until I am clear about God’s leading?
- Has the Spirit convicted me of any sin related to this question? Can I sense His peace moving forward in a particular direction?
- What desires and abilities has God given me that are relevant to this question?
- How has God worked in my circumstances to lead me concerning this issue?
- Have I sought the counsel of godly leaders and others in my church? What do they have to say about it?
- What are the pros and cons surrounding this question? What makes the most sense from a biblical perspective?

Giving our teens room to develop their own convictions is much more challenging and risky in the short term. In some ways, we feel that we are not in control and that our children may choose to do things that will harm them. Here is a reality check: We are not in control anyway. If our teens really want to do something, they will figure out a way to do it even if we don’t allow it. We’ve also got to remember that the consequences that come from bad decisions are how we learn and grow.

Now, I’m not suggesting that there are no house rules that we

should require our children to conform to whether they like it or not. We certainly have those in place. But since our goal is to raise mature, Christ-following adults, we’ve got to provide the opportunity and context for them to “have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.” The best time for teens to practice their powers of discernment is while they are still at home, so that we can disciple them through the process.



Matthew McDill and his wife, Dana, homeschool their nine children in Clemmons. Matthew is the executive director for North Carolinians for Home Education and continues to serve as president of the board. Through his ministry, Truth to Freedom (truthtofreedom.org), he teaches and writes about discipleship, marriage, family, parenting, home education, and church. Matthew holds a bachelor’s degree in communication along with two master’s degrees and a doctorate in biblical studies.



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Featured Speakers



Dr. William E. (Bill) Brown is a nationally recognized speaker and expert in culture and worldview, speaking in over 30 countries on issues related to worldviews, culture, and ethics. He led two Christian universities as president—Bryan College and Cedarville University. He is the Senior Fellow of Worldview and Culture at the Colson Center for Christian Worldview and directs the Colson Fellows Program. He is the author of *Making Sense of Your Faith*, *Where Have All the Dreamers Gone?*, *Observations from a Biblical Worldview*, and *Making Sense of Your World* (with Gary Phillips and John Stonestreet), a book used by many colleges and universities. Dr. Brown is the executive producer and speaker for the award-winning DVD series, *re:View*, a worldview study that equips Christians to discern and engage contemporary culture from a Christ-centered perspective. Dr. Brown and his wife, Lynne, have two children and four grandchildren.

- How Christianity Changed the World
- The World of Worldviews
- The Dynamics of the Christian Worldview
- God Is Not Silent
- Now, How Should We Live?
- Responding to Cultural Flashpoints
- Mission and Vision



Belinda Bullard is the founder of A Blessed Heritage Educational Resources (blessedheritage.com), a leading provider of multicultural history curriculum featuring African American presence and contribution. She is married to her best friend, Reggie, and they have two daughters and one son, who were educated at home. Her youngest child is in college, and her older two are college graduates paving their way in the fashion and performing arts industries. She is a servant of the Most High in her writing, speaking, and business endeavors. As her homeschool journey came to an end, she developed a passion for gardening and the power of food as medicine. She is now a Texas Certified Master Gardener and manager of a two-acre organic garden that services seniors and home-bound clients. Her family's homeschooling journey, complete with encouragement and the insight she has gained over the years, can be enjoyed at blessedheritagechronicles.com.

- Tweaking Misfit Curriculum to Fit Your Family
- Ten Messages I Would Tell My Younger Homeschooling Self
- Don't Just Teach History; Build a World Changer
- Preparing Now for College Success Later
- Turning High School Experiences into Transcripts That Are Impactful



Kirk Martin is the founder of CelebrateCalm.com, host of *Calm Parenting Podcast*, and homeschooling father. He has shown almost 1,000,000 parents how to stop the yelling, defiance, and power struggles with the most strong-willed children. Kirk is known for very practical strategies and scripts delivered with humor and compassion. Learn how to get your kids to listen the first time while building a close, trusting relationship.

- Stop the Yelling, Lecturing and Power Struggles
- 10 Ways to Stop Defiance, Meltdowns and Disrespect
- Stop Sibling Fights
- Discipline That Works: Get Your Kids to Listen the *First Time*
- Messy Marriage Stuff: 10 Things Your Spouse Desperately Wants You to Know
- Dads, Discipline and De-Escalating

Conference Speakers and Workshops

Featured Speakers



Andrew Pudewa is the founder and principal speaker of the Institute for Excellence in Writing. Presenting around the world, he addresses issues relating to teaching, writing, thinking, spelling, and music with clarity, insight, practical experience, and humor. His seminars for parents, students, and teachers have helped transform many a reluctant writer and have equipped educators with powerful tools to dramatically improve students' skills. Although he is a graduate of the Talent Education Institute in Japan (Suzuki Method) and holds a Certificate of Child Brain Development, his best endorsement is from a young Alaskan boy who called him "the funny man with the wonderful words." He and his wonderful, heroic wife, Robin, have homeschooled their seven children and are now proud grandparents of fifteen, making their home in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

- **Teaching Boys and Teaching Girls: Towards a Better Understanding**
- **Principles of Motivation**
- **Reading Strategies for the Struggling or Nonreader**
- **Fairy Tales and the Moral Imagination**
- **The Three Best Things I Did as a Homeschool Dad**
- **Preparation for Persecution: A Curriculum Proposal**
- **Mastery Learning, Ability Development, and Individualized Education**



Dr. Steve and Megan Scheibner have spent the last twenty years developing parenting, grand-parenting, and youth character development resources. In 2010, they formed Characterhealth.com to share their researched methods with parents worldwide. The Scheibners are biblical counselors with years of counseling experience. Steve received his doctorate in 2011, writing on the role of parents in the character development of children. Megan earned her master's in Christian ministry in 2020. Years of research into character development have uniquely prepared them to equip today's parents. With eight children, their practical tips and techniques have undergone years of hands-on testing. Besides speaking at conferences and churches, the Scheibners appeared as guests on Family Talk with Dr. James Dobson, In the Market with Janet Parshall, the Glenn Beck TV show, and many other venues. Through seminars, books, podcasts, blogs, and articles, they have helped thousands of parents transform their homes and families into relationally strong models of Christian living. Join them as together we train a new generation of courageous, Christ-like, and character-healthy leaders.

- **The A to Z of a Character Healthy Homeschool** (Megan)
- **Training Young Men to Be Gentlemen in a Feminist Culture** (Steve)
- **Training Teens to Take the Initiative** (Steve)
- **Traditions, Transitions, and Transparency: Lasting Success for the Homeschooling Family!** (Megan)
- **Living on Borrowed Time, Nine Practices of the Proactive Parent** (Steve)
- **The Toddler Toolbox** (Megan)
- **Marriage, Communication, and Friendship** (Steve and Megan)
- **2ML (Second Mile Leadership for Men)** (Steve)
- **The Disciple-Making Mom** (Megan)



Sonya Shafer is a popular homeschool speaker and writer, specializing in the Charlotte Mason method. She has been on an adventure for more than twenty years studying, researching, practicing, and teaching Charlotte's gentle and effective methods of education. Her passion for homeschooling her own four daughters grew into helping others and then into Simply Charlotte Mason, which publishes her many books and provides a place of practical encouragement to homeschoolers at simplycharlottesmason.com.

- **Laying Down the Rails: The Power of Good Habits in Your Homeschool**
- **Using Charlotte Mason with Special Needs**
- **Feed Your Child's Mind, Don't Just Exercise It**
- **Charlotte Mason and Her Methods**
- **Keep It Simple: How to Teach Your Whole Family Together**
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Janice Broyles

Making Good Writers of All Students



Paul Cwik, Ph.D.

How to Teach Economics and Personal Finance to Your Kids



Katie Dugdale

Homeschool Lingo Defined
Homegrown Homeschooling



Jessica Embry

To Co-op or Not to Co-op?
Five Steps to Planning for Your Homeschool Year



Jeff Ertzberger

Hold Everything! You Mean I Can Teach My Kids to Code?
How to Dual Enroll without Losing Control



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7 Habits of Healthy and Happy Homeschools



Debbie Mason

Homeschooling High School



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Penny Mayes

The Benefits of Hands-on Education (Hint: It Makes You Smarter!)



Dana McDill

Victory in the Battle



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Leading Homeschoolers in North Carolina

Raising Effective Christian Leaders

How to Teach Your Children to Love and Understand God's Word



Marjorie McIlvaine

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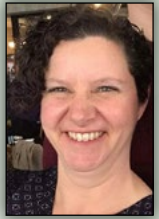
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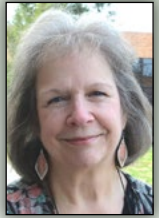
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What I Learned at My First Thrive! Conference

by Laura Adams

When I stepped into the Benton Convention Center for the 2022 Thrive! Conference, my soul was exhausted. I had just completed my first year of officially homeschooling my kindergartener, along with doing some preschool activities with my three-year-old and chasing my toddler.

As a second-generation homeschooler, my experience as a homeschooled student was extensive. My experience as a homeschooling mother, not so much. I knew I needed help.

My mom made this look so easy. . . what was I doing wrong? I wondered.

Before I arrived, I perused the list of workshops on NCHE's website and made a list of the ones that were most pertinent to my situation. I knew I needed to learn more about testing and teaching reading, and I also wanted some parenting encouragement.

I filled my suitcase with notebooks, snacks, and comfortable shoes and made my way westward to Winston-Salem. Over the next three days, I found refreshment in listening to dynamic speakers, chatting with workers in the vendor hall, and even making new friends in the hallways.

One of the first sessions covered standardized testing. Since my son is only six, we have not yet dealt with the standardized testing process. A kind and experienced speaker eased my fears and provided clear information. The lecture helped me to understand my options and to develop a plan for when I need to test my son.

I also attended sessions on teaching reading, which reassured me that learning to read is a process that takes time. I also learned some helpful tips on presenting the material to my son. Another talk focused on best practices in early childhood education. Each session brought value, education, and encouragement.

Homeschooling is a way of educating, but as I've done it, I've realized that many other things are tied in with it. Homeschooling is a magnifying glass of the failings and foibles of the entire family. This being the case, workshops on parenting caught my interest. One speaker gave a talk on teaching children how to be resilient. She pointed out that we adults also have to be resilient! We all make mistakes, and homeschooling gives us the opportunity to grow along with our children.

When I wasn't attending workshops, I loved browsing through the vendor hall. Some companies brought back fond memories of my childhood. Their booths were lined with books I loved as a girl. Others featured new products that my son would love. I made several purchases and enjoyed the cheerful bustle in the atmosphere. I chatted with complete strangers in the hallways and while standing in lines. Everyone was so kind and congenial.

I had gone a few years without attending a large convention or conference of any kind due to the coronavirus pandemic. There is something deeply encouraging about being around a crowd of like-minded people, and Thrive! is no exception. Every parent there is deeply invested in their children and their wellbeing. I knew I was not alone.

When I pulled into my driveway, three little noses were pressed against the glass in the front window. As I approached the door, I smiled. After three days of Thrive!, I felt refreshed and ready to not grow weary in doing good (Galatians 6:9).



Laura McKinney Adams is a wife and mother to three. She holds a bachelor's degree from Liberty University. While at Liberty, she met her husband, who is a fellow homeschool graduate. She writes about classical education, lifelong learning for moms, and homeschooling the early years at

lauramckinneyadams.com.

"This is my first year attending the conference. It has been so encouraging, and I have so many new ideas to consider to make the homeschool experience what I want it to be for my family."

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How NC Child Care Law Affects Homeschool Co-ops

by Spencer Mason

Many homeschoolers in North Carolina enjoy having their children participate in homeschool co-ops or enrichment classes. There are many kinds of these offered in our state from a small co-op of just a few families who meet in a home to large co-ops or enrichment classes that meet in a facility such as a church. Before 2013, DNPE interpreted our law to say that all core classes had to be taught by the homeschool parent. This interpretation made homeschool co-ops more questionable. While many of us did this anyway, it was a difficulty for some homeschool parents. They would not do any type of class outside the home because they wanted to obey DNPE's interpretation of the law. This choice limited the homeschooler's options, especially in high school. So, in 2013, NCHE worked to change the homeschool law to allow homeschoolers to participate in outside classes. Since then, homeschool co-ops and outside classes have become numerous. These can be a great benefit for a homeschool family.

However, there is a law in NC that affects the legality of co-ops that is not under the homeschool law. It is the child care law. It is only recently that we became aware of this law and how it affects us. Basically, if a co-op with young children meets too many days a week or too many hours in a day, they should have a child care license.

The Details

Homeschool co-ops that allow children under the age of thirteen to be dropped off (no parent onsite) and that meet more than two days a week or more than four hours in any one day are required to have an NC child care license unless they meet one of the exemptions listed below. To put it another way, in order to avoid the need for this child care license, the co-op should not meet more than two days a week and should not meet more than four hours in either one of those days

unless they require a parent to be onsite. This requirement would be true if any one child participated for that long.

Also, if the co-op is meeting in a facility other than a home and meets the qualifications of needing a child care license, then the co-op also needs to have a state certified administrator.

The Exemptions

There are exemptions to this regulation. These exemptions include: programs such as "specialized activities or instruction such as athletics, dance, art, music lessons, horseback riding, gymnastics, or organized clubs for children, such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H groups, or boys and girls clubs." Other exemptions are: private schools (with conditions), public schools, and Vacation Bible schools. Also, church sponsored programs are given the option in the child care law to operate under a Notice of Compliance with child care rules and regulations rather than a child care license. The exemption more relevant for homeschool co-ops is the one about being a church-sponsored program. If your co-op meets this condition and the church meets its requirements, then the co-op doesn't need a child care license.

Opening a Private School

Another option available for groups that would need a child care license to operate legally is to open a private school by notifying the NC Division of Non-Public Education (DNPE). Some organizations that were started as co-ops are now established NC private schools. The process of opening a private school is relatively simple. Learn the requirements for operating a private school on the DNPE website.

While homeschool co-ops can be a great option for homeschoolers in NC, we need to make sure that we are aware of the law and do our best to obey it. NCHE's goal here is to make you aware of this law and how it affects your co-op.



Spencer Mason is the law and policy director and office manager for NCHE. He and his wife, Debbie, homeschooled their four children from birth through high school. He has been on the NCHE board since 1988. Their six grandchildren are now being homeschooled.



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Hedges and Homeschooling

by Amanda Garner

The arrival of springtime signals the end of another year here at Garner Christian Academy. Spring also means it's time for yard work once again. Typically, I don't do much (any) yard work, but when I noticed the bushes looking a little unruly, I decided to pitch in and trim them myself. The weather was pleasant, and I was tired of being cooped up inside all winter. So I scrounged around in the garage until I found the hedge clippers and set to work with resolution. As I clipped here and trimmed there, I couldn't help but notice some striking parallels between teaching and hedging.

Teaching and hedging can be both fun and easy. After homeschooling for eighteen years, I've found that what's true of the bush is true of the school year: the first few weeks are fun and easy! I think to myself, "I got this, no problem! It's hard work, but it'll be fun and rewarding." As with the bushes, it doesn't take long for the enthusiasm to wear off. Why? Because we get tired, and the newness wears off. The solution? Pace yourself. Whether it's bushes or books, you have to settle into a reasonable pace so you can finish the task. For clipping, that means taking a break to wipe your brow, grab a drink of water, step back and evaluate the progress. That's also the secret to enduring the school year. One of the best decisions I made years ago was to take a modified year-round approach to our school schedule. We roughly do six weeks on, one week off. I have found this keeps my sanity in check and allows me to catch my breath and get caught up with the rest of life, which leads to my next point.

When teaching and hedging, know when to quit. I do not mean quitting homeschooling altogether! Don't give up; you can do it. What I do mean is knowing when to call it a day. If you've been homeschooling for any length of time, you know we all have one of those days. As soon as you get out of bed, it starts going downhill. (Insert whatever chaotic scenario comes to mind.) But you are determined, at least initially, to redeem the day; that you will do school no matter what. Maybe you're grumpy and hormonal. Maybe your kids are cranky and uncooperative. Maybe the baby or toddler was up all night. Whatever the case, it's just not going smoothly. Instead of the sweet, patient, Laura Ingles type teacher you envisioned yourself being, you're more of a cross between the Hulk and Cruella de Vil.

The best thing you can do for yourself and your children is to stop. Put the books aside and make a new plan. Instead,

take a field trip (art/history). Go to the park and have a picnic (P.E.). Or find a good episode or two on NOVA or the History Channel for the kids and go back to bed. Obviously, this should be the exception and not the rule. When I set out to cut the bushes, I thought I could do it all in one day. Being stubborn, I decided that since I couldn't finish the task all at once, I'd go as long as possible. Being really stubborn, I kept working even when my stomach was growling and my face was beet red. By the time I went inside, I felt sick, and I was no good to anyone the rest of the evening. There is great wisdom in knowing when to stop so you can recover and regroup.

When teaching and hedging, deal with the undergrowth. This point is where it gets messy. As I stepped back to evaluate my initial progress, I noticed that in addition to trimming the tops of the bushes, there was also a good bit of undergrowth that needed to be cut and cleared. That undergrowth required squatting low and practically crawling under each bush. The ground was slightly squishy from recent rainfall which produced a damp backside when I lost my balance. There was also a bunch of spider-webby masses and, as it turned out, poison ivy. It would have been much easier just to leave it, but I wanted it done right, which meant I had to get messy. Here's the deal with homeschooling: it's more than just academics. That's just the top of the bush. Homeschooling is also about character training and dealing with heart attitudes, and that is where it gets messy! Sure, it would be easy just to ignore the undergrowth of bad attitudes, sibling rivalry, disrespectful tones, and halfhearted efforts. But it is far wiser to stop the lesson and spend time addressing the attitude than to push forward with lesson plans and fail to deal with the heart. A child with a soft heart and teachable spirit is greater than the one who knows it all but lacks integrity. C.S. Lewis stated it well: "Education without values, as useful as it is, seems rather to make man a more clever devil." Almost every mom I know decided to homeschool because she was greatly concerned about the spiritual health and influences on her children. Yet, in the name of *getting school done*, sometimes we fail to spend the time necessary to train our children in godliness.

When teaching and hedging, some things are stubborn and difficult. There was one bush that just would—not—cooperate. I clipped and pruned, shaped and sculpted. No matter what—or where—I tried, it just would not take shape. Even now, it has a gaping hole in the side created by uneven branches and a partially twisted trunk. I eventually realized that there was not a lot I could do to change its shape. While I would never advocate an attempt to treat or shape each child exactly the same, I have noticed that some children are just determined to go (grow) their own way. I have one like that, one that redefines *stubborn*. Often, this child is difficult to embrace. Does that give me permission to throw down the clippers and walk away, abandoning my task? Absolutely not!

What it does mean is that I do the best I can with what I have, and that I endeavor to love unconditionally the twisted branches and missing limbs—that I love the child for who they are and not what I wish they were. If you struggle with a child who is difficult, don't lose hope and don't ever give up. You are influencing the shape of their heart and life whether or not you see the results.

I finished my job after a couple of days and felt a great sense of accomplishment every time I pulled into our driveway. Needless to say, it pales in comparison to watching our young adult children take flight as we have graduated each one, knowing the Lord has honored our faithfulness. With three down and one to go, I can attest to the fact that it has been well worth every minute invested, every struggle overcome.



Amanda and her husband, Wes, have been married twenty-eight years and have home educated all four of their children. They currently have three homeschool graduates with one more to go! Amanda is a regular conference speaker, contributing writer for the GREENHOUSE magazine, occasional blogger, and most often, a regular homeschool mom and wife. In her free time, she can be found binge reading historical fiction and frequenting local cafes for a good espresso. Amanda and her family live, love, and do life together in Franklinton, North Carolina.

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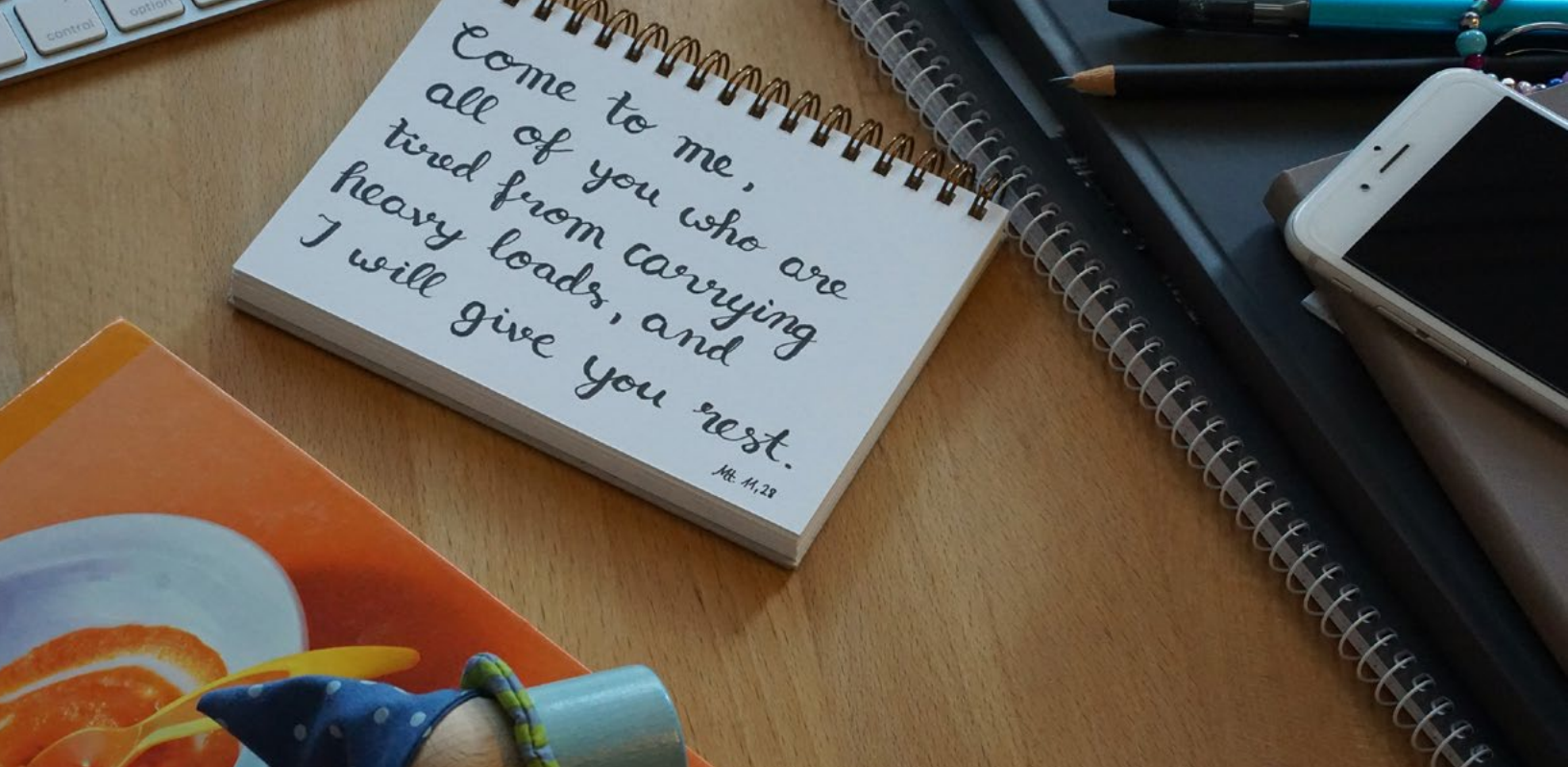
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Three Easy Tips for Teaching Bible Memory Verses to Kids

by Amy Sloan

Want to include more Bible memory verses in your homeschool or family life? Here are three tips to help make Scripture memorization easier for any age range of kids. Try out these easy strategies for bringing more of God's Word into your homeschool Morning Time or family devotions!

1. Use Hand Motions for a Multi-Sensory Approach to Memorizing the Bible.

Hand motions aren't just for little kids! Even teens and adults find that incorporating hand motions makes it easier to memorize new Bible verses.

Don't worry! You don't have to have a hand motion for every single word. Look for repeated or other key words in the passage, and focus on those. These key moments will be memory hooks as you teach and recite memory verses with your kids.

For example, this summer I taught 1 John 1:5-9 at our church's VBS. Words like "message" and "truth" that related to God's Word corresponded to an opening-book motion with our hands. For "light," I used an ASL sign for light that I found online. For "deceive" and "lie," we put our hands in front of our mouths. I also used simple motions for a few other words and phrases.

The key thing to remember with hand motions is to keep them simple and memorable. We don't want the motions to detract or distract from God's Word. Instead, we want the motions to make it easier to memorize the Bible verses we're learning.

2. Use Responsive Reading for Longer Passages in Homeschool Morning Time.

In our homeschool Morning Time routine, I often include longer passages of Scripture in our memory work and recitation time.

We have found that using a responsive reading approach makes it easier to memorize the Bible verses, and helps us pay closer attention to a longer chapter.

The procedure for this is very simple. First, I find the passage in my translation of choice at BibleGateway online. Next, I copy and paste the desired Bible verses into my word processor. I divide the passage into smaller chunks. Often it is easiest to

separate at the verse divisions, although, sometimes I make exceptions for ease of recitation. I then alternate light print and bold print throughout the passage.

3. Setting Bible Verses to Music Makes Memory Work Even Easier.

I find that when it comes to short passages of Scripture (a verse or two), the easiest way to hide it in our hearts is with song. Here are a few of our family's favorite resources to help us sing the Bible and memorize God's Word:

- Psalm singing in family devotions and *Morning Time*
- *Seeds Family Worship*
- *Slugs and Bugs Sing the Bible*
- *G.T. and the Halo Express*
- *Hide 'Em in Your Heart* by Steve Green
- *Never Be Shaken* by Judy Rogers
- *Sons of Korah* (settings of the Psalms)

Here are a few more bonus strategies to help hide God's Word in the hearts of your children:

- Copywork: Trace or copy Bible verses.
- Audio Bible: Have your children listen to God's Word as they go to sleep, ride in the car, or enjoy quiet play-time.
- Illustration: Print out a copy of the Bible verse you're memorizing and

have your children color or illustrate it.

- Post it: Include Bible verses as home décor. Write verses in dry-erase markers on your bathroom mirrors, or write short sections on post-it notes to change throughout the week.
- Translate: Are you learning another language? Try translating the verse from English into your secondary language, then compare it with a Bible translated in that language.
- Pray: Use the verses you're memorizing as a spring-board for your family prayers. We are to pray in God's will, and we know when we pray His word back to Him that is exactly what we're doing!
- Apply: Don't be mere hearers of the Word. By God's grace, apply the verses you're memorizing throughout the day in your actions.

This article was originally published on HumilityandDoxology.com.



Amy Sloan and her husband, John, are second-generation homeschoolers to five children, seven to seventeen years old, adventuring together in NC where they pursue a restfully-classical education by grace alone. Amy writes at HumilityandDoxology.com and hosts the "Homeschool Conversations with Humility and Doxology" podcast.

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How to Have a Bible Class in Your Homeschool

by Dava Banner

We homeschoolers are so blessed to be able to make choices for ourselves and our children. Do we want our homeschool to be primarily academic? Do we want arts and music to be part of the education? How much outside socialization is good? How much planned physical activity do we want? Will we have hands-on learning? And, possibly the most critical consideration for Christian homeschoolers: will we have daily Bible/religious teaching?

Religious teaching: it's our choice! And what a blessing that is! So how might we go about creating our own Bible class?

Young children are such sweet little sponges! It's so easy for them to memorize. They can memorize Bible verses or even longer passages. When children are younger, they can more easily memorize the Lord's prayer and the Ten Commandments than when they are older. Knowing the books of the Bible in order, both testaments is very useful knowledge. Memorization takes only a little daily practice and review. Bible verse songs are fun too!

Reading the Bible every day is important. What ages benefit most? All ages! You know if your child needs a children's Bible or a more adult version. You might enjoy using a Bible written in chronological order. There are many types of devotional guides to consider. Children usually excel at learning when you read aloud to them. Keep reading aloud until they graduate! Your Bible class could continue at the supper table and be part of your family devotions.

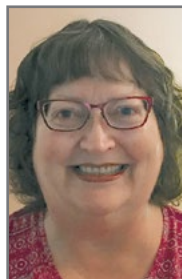
Missionary stories and biographies can add perspective to your Bible class. Children love to hear about the commitment and adventure of missionary families. Many missionaries that you know or support will send out newsletters and updates that you can include in your class. Your children will want to pray for and write letters to missionaries.

As your children grow into teens, please read aloud books on Christian living. Our church has a great reading list on its website with titles that are helpful for teens. If you don't have time to read them all aloud, you can group several books as an elective for your students. Have them read the books and write summaries, comments or have discussion.

There is no substitute for reading the Bible for yourself. I required my students to read it through on their own before graduation. (They were

already baptized believers.) Some of my guys read it through more than once by using a Bible app with their friends. If reading one chapter per day will take two years to read it through, reading two chapters per day, will take you one year. Because it's so compelling, you might choose to read much more than that! Those with a Bible app on their phone can even have it read aloud!

My desire for a complete education for my children included a daily Bible class. It was my choice and my privilege, and as usual, I learned right along with them! I hope this article encourages you to do the same!



Dava Banner has been married for thirty-seven years and has three fine sons. She and her family live on a small farm in Crouse.



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Settle into Your Decision

by Jennifer Smith

In this ever-changing world, parents are being asked to make decisions a previous generation never thought possible. Some could argue too many decisions are placed before us daily. From streaming television to ordering dinner in an instant, a continuous dose of choices lies before us. This barrage of choices doesn't stop when it comes to schooling our kids either.

Our parents and grandparents enrolled their children in the local school; everyone sent their kids there. Occasionally, a private school would be available but only for a few families in the community. While we entrusted our neighbors with helping us educate our kids, we didn't lose sight of the fact that it was still our job to be the parent. Today there are families that are more transient in how they live, and communities are divided on how society should operate. We judge ourselves against perfect-looking families hundreds of miles away that we see on social media and too many times, question our decisions. Yet so many opportunities for education—public, private, online, co-ops, homeschool, and even hybrids—are available.

Homeschooling has become much more popular and dare I say, a norm in society. If you are reading this article, most likely, you've made the decision to homeschool, and that presents even more decisions. Let's be honest that at least once you have asked yourself these questions: What curriculum should we use? Will my children perform well on standardized tests? Are they having enough good social interaction? How do I know if the schooling is really effective? These are all questions I've asked myself.

Why do we lack confidence and joy when it comes to choosing and leading our child's education? Too many times early on in my homeschool journey, I questioned if I should be educating my kids at all. Many studies have shown that most of a child's brain development happens by age five, but we have angst over the formal education years. How, when we have already laid eighty percent of the foundation before kindergarten, do we so quickly forget we are the most qualified!

I keep telling myself one thing—let's make one more choice and own it! No matter the mistakes we've made or lessons we haven't finished, this journey is ours alone. One day you will sign the diploma for graduation. You will know every effort was given to teach them what you could. Let's enjoy these years because like parenthood, they are fleeting. Each of us who chooses to homeschool a child has the same fear of failure. If they don't do well, we will feel responsible, but wouldn't we carry that burden as a parent anyway?

Surely if we have made the choice, we must trust the benefits will outweigh the failures. My oldest is finishing middle school, and the end of our journey is so close. I consider how I'll look back when she is finished, as well as how I will feel when all of my children have finished. I won't

remember the test results, the individual lessons, or the social activities we did. I'll ask, "Did we have more days than not that were filled with joy?" I'll remember my children happily getting to their schoolwork each morning and my teenagers eager to learn and find future careers. I will look into their eyes as mine are filled with tears on graduation day and know that the grace of God got us here. There will be no more exams, the desks will be empty, and my calendar quiet, yet I will live with a peace knowing there was never a better choice than to be their teacher.



Jennifer Smith was a homeschool student in the early 1990s and now enjoys teaching her three dynamic kids. She sits on the board of a Charlotte Mason style co-op and leads the Stanly Montgomery Homeschool Association with her husband. As a regional liaison for the NCHE, she strives to serve homeschooling families in NC with faith, joy, and excellence.

A woman with long dark hair and glasses is sitting at a desk, talking on a black smartphone. She is wearing a white knit sweater. In front of her is a laptop and a white mug. The background is a blurred office or home workspace.

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Professional Development for Homeschool Parents

by Evelyn Bickley

If you've been homeschooling for more than a week—or even if you haven't even started yet—I'm sure you have asked yourself, "Am I able to do this? What if I fail my kids? What makes me think I'm qualified to teach my children?"

You may have asked yourself similar questions before you ever had children—and yet, here you are, with little people in your family. Unless you have only a newborn, you have already taught your children a myriad of things: smiling, walking, potty-training (let's admit it: *that's* a big one!), saying "please" and "thank you," and so many other things. You've read to them, introduced them to animals and the outdoors, and shown them how to count. You've taught them to use crayons or markers (on paper, please—not the wall!) and utensils when they eat. And while you were doing those things, you were teaching (in order): literature and vocabulary, biology and natural science, math, art and fine motor skills! You have been their teacher since the very beginning.

"But," you ask, "they're older now. How do I keep ahead of them—or at least keep up?" Don't worry: you have more ways than you know to increase your knowledge of this profession of being a homeschool parent.

1. *Homeschool Conferences:* First, I suggest that you strongly consider attending the NCHE Thrive! Conference. Held in May of each year in Winston-Salem, it is loaded with inspirational and how-to sessions from seasoned homeschool parents and leaders. By the time spring gets here, I am usually pretty worn out with school. Attending the conference reignites my energy, gives me new ideas for dealing with difficulties and shows me that I am not alone—that there are many other families doing this hard thing with me. If you cannot personally attend a conference, I encourage you to listen to the conference sessions. These recordings can be ordered on the NCHE website.
2. *Networking:* although there can be some value in an online tribe, finding those real, live families near you is invaluable. You may find these parents and their kids at park days, PE activities, field trips or local clubs (sports, chess, choir, etc.).

Avoid the temptation to drop off your kids at these activities so you can catch up on errands. These activities offer important times to network with other moms and dads. Pick their brains. Learn from these other parents what is working for them in terms of curriculum, discipline, or character training. Share with them what your family is doing and interested in. You might find others with similar interests who would be willing to share teaching with you. Networking in any occupation is important. Use it in your homeschool, too. (To find local support groups see: nche.com/community/regions/).

3. *Planning Days:* I live in Charlotte. Did you know that the Char-Meck school system has nineteen teacher workdays during the year? *Nineteen!* These days are considered part of the teachers' professional development. Make planning days a legitimate part of your schedule, too. Do you need days off to look at what's coming up in the kids' textbooks? Do you need a day to cook ahead to put meals in the freezer (ummm . . . have the kids help and call it home ec or independent living skills)? Do you need a mental health day? It's part of your professional life.
4. *Workshops:* Public school teachers are required to have continuing education certificates. Many places, such as museums, nature centers, and hospitals, offer adult continuing education. It's legitimate to take time to attend a workshop that will advance skills needed in your profession of homeschooling.
5. *Webinars and Online Resources:* If you can't find a local workshop on the topic you're looking for, or the schedule doesn't work for you, there are many free online educational webinars on homeschooling topics

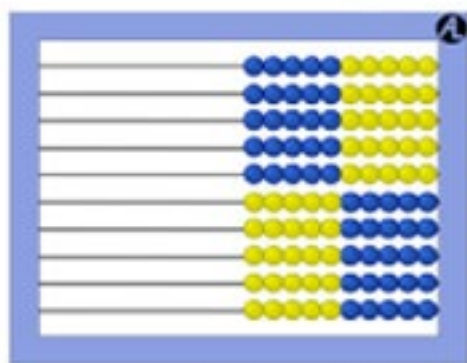
such as Homeschooling High School and Getting Started at nche.com/webinars/. Another great resource for free online webinars on nearly fifty homeschooling topics is hslsda.org/community/webinars. A google search of "free [fill in the blank] webinars" yields many options—but please use discernment in choosing which best suit you and your family's life philosophy and situation.

6. *Professional Reading:* Whatever you are reading that makes you a more informed educator counts: blogs, books, or magazine articles like this one. Keep up with trends, not only in homeschooling but the things that are going on in public and private schools, too. Read about different educational philosophies: classical, Charlotte Mason, unit studies, unschooling, de-schooling, eclectic, etc. Think about which might work best for you and your kids.

Many homeschool families keep track in some way of how and what the students are doing: what subjects/topics are covered, how many hours are invested in each area, and what growth or progress they are making. But you, as the leader of your school, should be growing, too. Remember that your development as a parent/teacher is vitally important not only to your children but to your well-being and self-confidence as well.



Evelyn Bickley homeschooled all four of her children from birth through high school and continues to invest in students and their families by serving as NCHE's activities director. She enjoys the hobby of letterboxing and traveling to just about anywhere but especially places that have historical significance or scenic beauty.



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The Journey

by Diane Helfrich

We've all heard the sage expression, "The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." (Lao Tzu). We fundamentally know that our kids are on an educational journey from preschool to high school graduation. But have you taken the time to think about your journey? A journey starts somewhere and ends somewhere, and we are all on one, whether we realize it or not. The journey goes better if we see it for ourselves and pay as much attention to our trip as we do to our children's! If you take a trip, you start with planning, soak in the journey itself, and then you have the memories afterwards. How does that apply to leading the educational journey in your home?

The Planning Phase

When most of us begin, we are frantic about ensuring we have all the bases covered—that our children will get everything they would have at school. We evaluate curricula and research to determine their needs at a given age. We buy books and the stuff of school (pencils, paper, colors, scissors, glue, red pencils, etc.). We do this again when panic sets in for middle school and when the even bigger panic sets in for high school.

Let's back up a moment. If you were taking a trip, say, to South Africa to go on a wildlife safari, would you rely on your lived experience to plan the trip, or would you engage the knowledge of others to help you? Having never been there or been on a safari, I would contact a travel agent and talk with people who had been on one about what works best and what to expect. Most of us don't see beginning to homeschool in the same light as a trip to South Africa; we see it as something much smaller. Yet, we are setting the path for this little person's life. It's a big deal!

I would always recommend that life planning is best done with a mentor—someone who knows more than I do and has demonstrated success in what they do. I would look to other homeschoolers whom I admire on several fronts: marriage, family structure, faith values, and educational values. I probably wouldn't want just one mentor. I would want several! One of my favorite authors is John Maxwell, who writes Christian leadership books. He always has about ten mentors. If a mentor is good enough for someone as successful as John Maxwell, and if Novak Djokovic still uses a tennis coach as one of the top players in the world, then perhaps I need mentors to help in the planning and execution of my school!

Where do you find mentors? You can begin at the NCHE Thrive! Conference where nationally recognized speakers will fill you to the brim with great information and where you will have ample ability to network with other homeschoolers and talk to mentors. NCHE also has a mentoring program for members. Co-ops are a ready pool of experience with parents excited to help others. You can also find these relationships through the church, sports, 4-H, etc. Honestly, get your travel guide, or guides, to help you plan each phase of the educational journey!

The Trip

You may embark on three educational journeys: elementary, middle, and high school. Know ahead that each one involves a different set of skills. So, you've begun. On your trip to South Africa (I'll assume with your family), you are excited about wild herds of animals, new and different foods, and a unique cultural experience you have never had. If you had been there before, there wouldn't be near the learning as there was on the first trip there. Everything you see is a learning event, not just for your kids but for you. Have you stopped to think about how much you will learn on your educational journey? You don't think a thing about the fact that you will learn new things on the trip to South Africa. Most of us have no training for homeschooling. Even if we have the training as an educator, homeschooling differs from a public or private school and is often different for each child.

Are you willing to go where your child is bent on going? Are you ready to explore topics for which you have no background? This point is where I see the true wonder of homeschooling. You get to learn right along with your child, whether it's algebra, ancient Middle East cultures, astrophysics, philosophy, or the respiration of plants. It is easy to shy away from topics for which we feel unqualified. Don't! You'll miss the adventure and the value of your journey! I am much richer today for the things my kids wanted to learn that I didn't know before. The fun of learning mushroomed as I was learning right with them, and we had a whole-family journey. Again, there are always resources to help you. Let your educational learning be part of your journey!

After you return from South Africa, you go through the photos you took, relive the journey, and share it with friends. There is a sadness that comes at the end of the trip. It's over. You move on in life to other things for you to accomplish. Similarly, as you release your children into the world, there is sadness and excitement. Homeschooling has been close to a 24x7 venture for several years. Be careful here not to make being a homeschooler your total identity. It's a journey you went through. If it becomes your sole identity, when it ends, you are lost. You are, in fact, a child of God, a spouse, a parent, a friend, a neighbor, and perhaps other things. You need balance in how you view yourself. Also, an ending always comes with a beginning, enriched by the experiences that have gone before. Focus there, and remember to plan for this time. You are beginning another journey, which also requires planning. The more time you invest in planning, the easier the transition will be.

I wish you the best in this journey of education. It is a sub-journey of life, albeit a very important one. Remember to see your journey along with your children's journey to graduation. You will learn, grow, fail, regroup, start again, and store memories. Embrace one of the most incredible journeys you will ever have!

"And so I am sure confident that God, who began this good work in you, will carry it on until it is finished on the Day of Christ Jesus." (Philippians 1:6 GNT)



Diane Helfrich is a retired fourteen-year veteran of homeschooling. She is married to David, and they have two children who have flown the nest. In addition to her passion for helping homeschoolers and volunteering as the development director for NCHE, she enjoys reading, card-making, and being part of a ukulele club.

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NCHE Graduate Offerings. NCHE offers several opportunities for graduating seniors of NCHE member families. The NCHE graduation ceremony, a high school diploma, the GREENHOUSE graduate issue, and a scholarship program. More information is available on the NCHE website at nche.com/graduate-central/. Deadlines vary but are coming soon. The earliest deadline is March 2.

NCHE Capital Fest is scheduled for April 5. Mark your calendars and plan to attend. This is an opportunity for you and your family to advocate for homeschooling with your elected officials and to learn more about our state government. For more information go to nche.com/events/capital-fest.



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The Homeschool Show from NCHE—NCHE produces a weekly radio and podcast program designed to help you homeschool with confidence and joy by providing homeschool news, interviews, and practical tips. Find out how and when to listen at nche.com/thehomeschoolshow.

Join NCHE. We want you to be a part of our homeschool family. One of the best ways you can do that is by becoming a member of NCHE. We serve all homeschoolers, but members receive the very best information, resources, mentoring, opportunities, and discounts. You can homeschool with confidence and joy! Learn more at nche.com/join/

Support NCHE with a generous donation. Do you value the NCHE legislative watch? Have you found helpful information on our website? Are the NCHE webinars helpful in your homeschooling journey? Has NCHE helped you connect to groups in your area? Do you love the Thrive! Conference? If you answered yes to any of these, please partner with us to keep homeschooling strong in North Carolina. Prayerfully donate today at nche.com/give.

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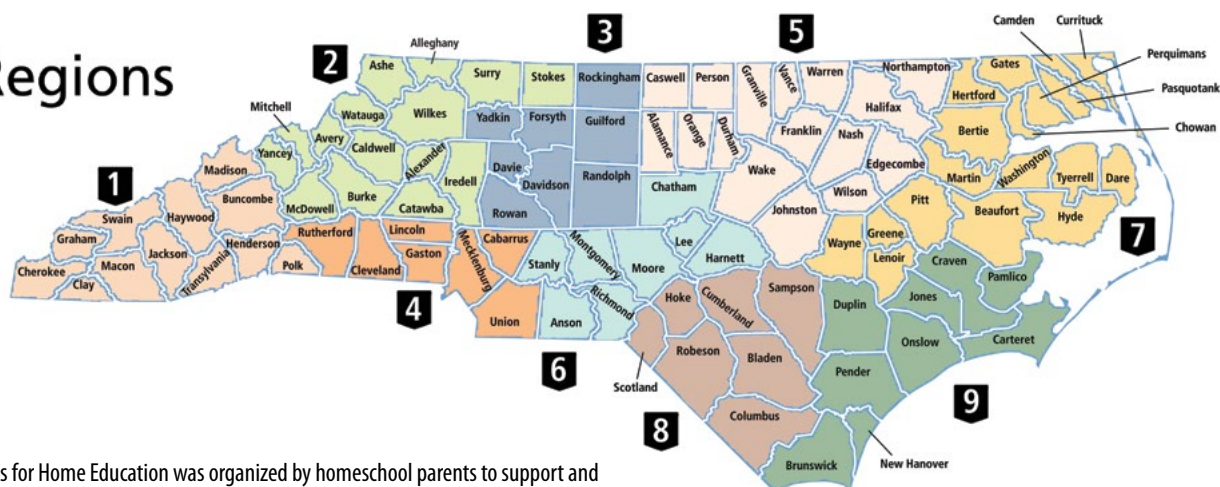
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About NCHE

In 1984, North Carolinians for Home Education was organized by homeschool parents to support and encourage home educators and to achieve the right to freely home educate in North Carolina. Since that time, NCHE has endeavored to serve the homeschoolers in NC. NCHE continues to work to promote the excellence of home education, provide support for those who choose to do so and protect the right to homeschool. Our name was selected so as to include all who are for home education, not just those who are currently homeschooling. NCHE is governed by a working board of directors who volunteer their time and efforts to serve homeschoolers. A non-profit organization, NCHE operates on the basis of biblical principles and welcomes members of all races and religions.

GREENHOUSE Information

The GREENHOUSE is the periodical of North Carolinians for Home Education. It is published twice a year, spring and fall. There is also a special graduate publication in May. It is mailed to all members 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 articles do not necessarily represent those of NCHE.

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