

The *Inform*er

a publication of the Indiana Association of Home Educators

Summer 2017

Free & Reduced
RESOURCES

Wing
Clippings

Large Family Homeschooling:
Minimalist Style



The Informer Core Values

- To be Christ-focused
- To be Indiana-focused
- To be encouraging
- To be a resource

IAHE

The IAHE is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1983 for the purpose of serving the Lord Jesus Christ by supporting and encouraging families interested in home education. We define home education as parent-directed, home-based, privately-funded education.

Our primary functions are maintaining visibility as home educators with civil government leaders, influencing the legislative process, sponsoring seminars for parent education, and publishing.

The IAHE is governed by a volunteer board of directors. Sixteen regional representative couples are in direct contact with local support groups across the state.

Our major source of income is our annual convention. With the growth of the home education movement, both our needs and responsibilities continue to grow, and we welcome your tax deductible contributions.



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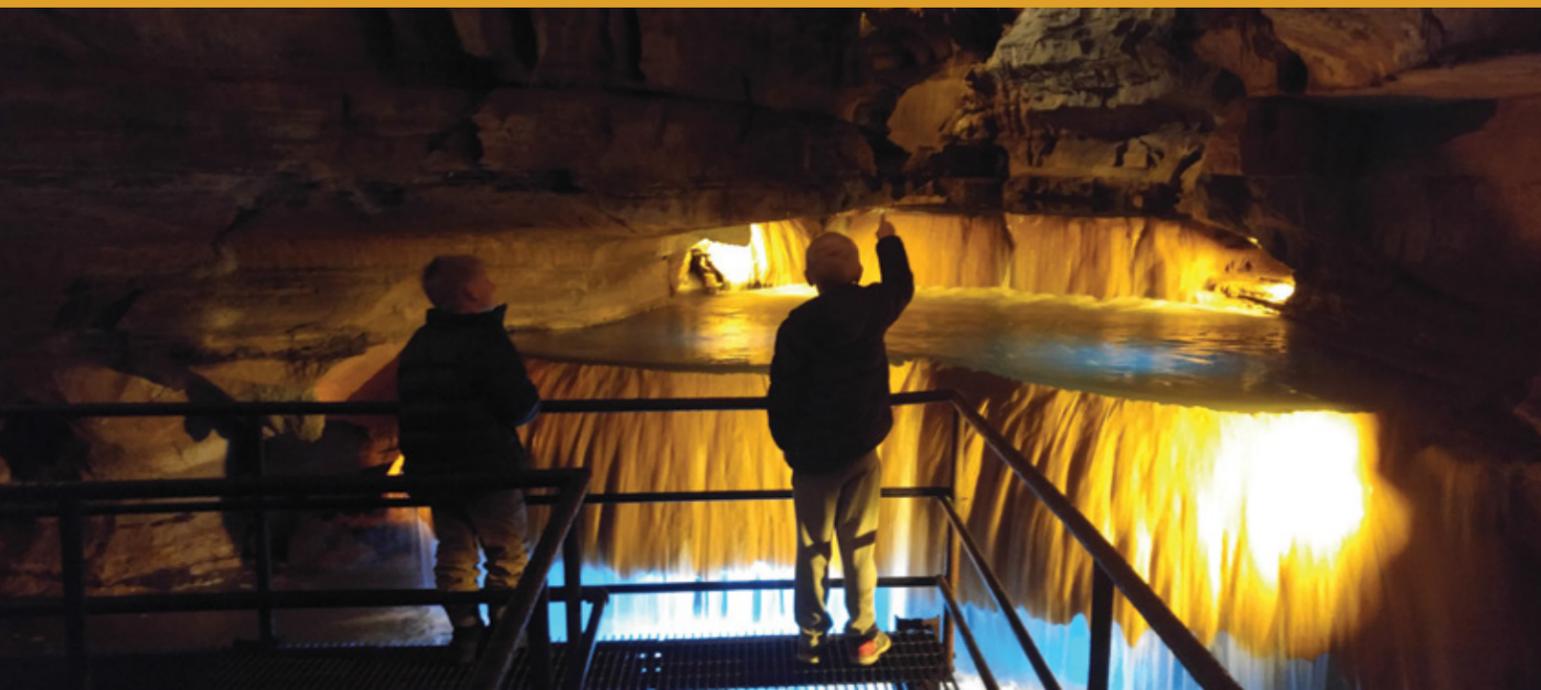
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Explore Above and Below in Historic Corydon & Harrison County

Above ground check out the Harrison County Discovery Center, play a round of mini-golf at Golf Shores Fun Center, zip through the trees at Squire Boone Zipline Adventures or discover the first state capitol. Below ground, take a tour of Indiana Caverns or Squire Boone Caverns.

For a sample itinerary, contact Stacy at 888-738-2137
 or stacy@thisisindiana.org.



Contents [Vol. 20, Issue 4]

featured

- 6** { **Free & Reduced Resources**
Debbie Burks
- 10** { **Diversifying the Classroom...Literature**
Alisha Mattingly
- 12** { **ABCs & 123s**
Amanda Runge
- 14** { **2017 Legislative Wrap-Up**
Debi Ketron
- 16** { **2017 IAHE Convention Recap & Expressions Winners**
- 20** { **Large Family Homeschooling: Minimalist Style**
Ruth Agbolosoo
- 22** { **Wing Clippings**
Heidi Krieder
- 24** { **Successful Transitions in the Middle**
Tara Bentley
- 26** { **Liberty vs. Freedom**
IN State Rep. Tom Washburne
- 30** { **Homeschool Humor**
Lori Schuler

in this issue

- Editor's Welcome & IAHE State Map...**4**
- New Regional Reps...**5**
- Music Minute for Kids...**9**
- Homeschool Time Out For Laughter...**31**
- Classifieds & Homeschool Business Ads...**31**

Welcome

a note from the editor

Summer! The windows are open... the birds are singing. It's a beautiful time of year! How will you use this season to homeschool?

While many families keep their schooling to a traditional calendar, some families homeschool year-round. Either way, true education happens every day. This understanding is part of what makes home education unique... and successful!

Summer is the perfect time to be intentional about incorporating new ways to learn into fun, family activities.

- Grab a book and a blanket and head out to the backyard.
- Pretend to be a tourist in your hometown and visit a local museum or historic site that you've never been to before.
- Attend summer activities at your local library and keep track of how many books each child reads.
- Review math facts using sidewalk chalk on the driveway.
- Practice memory verses while learning how to skip rope.
- Find a new volunteer opportunity.
- Have each child find one new recipe and let them help with the shopping, preparation, and cooking.
- Plant a garden and watch things grow.
- Do a unit study focused on your child's favorite things.

What will you do this summer to make learning unique? Let us know!

Tara Bentley

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The Informer Magazine

The Informer is published quarterly by the Indiana Association of Home Educators (IAHE) to provide information, inspiration, and support to homeschool families. Circulation is 8,000 and subscriptions are FREE upon request. The mailing list for The Informer is never sold or rented.

The articles in this magazine reflect the freedom of home educators in Indiana to choose from a wide variety of homeschool philosophies and teaching methods. Opinions and attitudes expressed in articles do not necessarily reflect the beliefs of the Indiana Association of Home Educators. IAHE does not endorse or advocate any one method or philosophy. The Board encourages each home educator to seek God's will in determining what is best for him, his school, and his students.

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IAHE Regional Representative Map



To reach your Regional Representative please call **317-467-6244** and dial your Region Representative's extension.

If you do not receive a response in a timely manner, please contact the IAHE office.

Regional Representatives

serve the homeschooling community throughout Indiana. Each representative is a veteran homeschooler who can help answer the questions of a family just starting out. They also communicate with local support groups in their region and keep them up to date on changes in the law and activities throughout the state.

You can contact your regional representative for information about spelling bees, sport clubs, book fairs, curriculum advice, workshops, standardized testing and convention information. They can also help you find a support group in your area, or if none is available, they'll help you start one.

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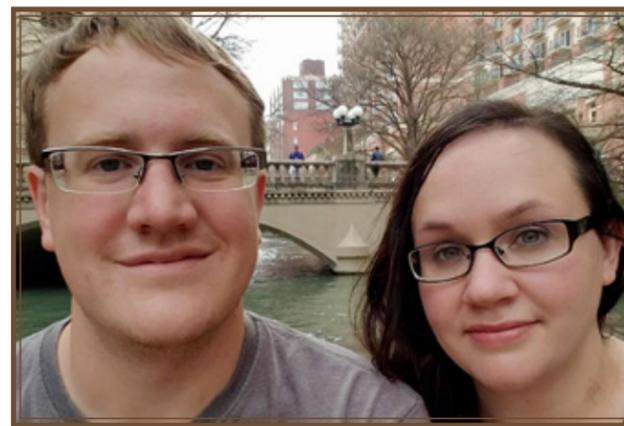
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New Reps for Region 3

Phillip & Rebekah Ash

Phillip and Rebekah have always known they would homeschool and started seven years ago. They have four children ages 2-11 and have been married for 13 years. Rebekah is a 2nd generation homeschooler and has recently started a homeschool support group in Logansport. ■



New Reps for Region 12

Chris & Emily Camenisch

Chris and Emily Camenisch's greatest joys are to lead their five children in their education and grow in their relationship with God. They love living in a region with so many growing homeschool opportunities. Emily has been a support group leader for six years and Chris, homeschooled himself, owns a construction and insulation company. ■



Online!

June 19th - 23rd

The IAHE is a volunteer driven organization. Our ability to serve Indiana homeschool families depends on the dedication of individual volunteers all year long.

How can you help?

Editing | Writing | Project Management
Social Media | Website Development
Leader Support | Marketing | Research & More!

Watch the IAHE blog and Facebook page for special posts and Live broadcasts to learn more about ways to be a part of our ministry serving homeschool families.

iahe.net



FREE & REDUCED Resources

— Debbie Burks

We are always on the lookout for the best resources and curricula for our children. We scour catalogs, go to the IAHE homeschool convention, and to curriculum sales. We sometimes buy from our friends, and take their recommendations on what really works. We carefully budget to get the most and best resources that we can. Many of us both pray and ponder over these decisions. However, some of the best resources for homeschooling are absolutely free or really inexpensive.

In the early days of homeschooling, most publishers would not sell to homeschoolers. A friend who was a secretary at a Christian school offered to purchase the preschool curriculum for me through the school. Even Christian publishers did not sell to homeschoolers at that time. I had to learn to be resourceful. I did not have much money as a young mother, and I did not have many options of things to purchase. As I look back, it was probably a good thing.

Though I used the preschool curriculum, I found that I could use things around the house for resources in our lessons. We used beans for counting, and for other math lessons. I saved the cardboard that used to come in all dress shirts, and we used it for a sturdy surface for projects. I remember one lesson where I wrote the numbers from zero to five, and then my son counted and glued the correct number

of beans next to the number. Lessons like that using household items are common in the Pinterest world where we now live. Not so much then. I bought Popsicle sticks and a bag of rubber bands. These were used to gain understanding when learning math facts. We used apples to teach subtraction when I was baking a pie. I started with ten apples and as each one was peeled and cut up, my toddler would tell me how many I had left. (He was a lover of Sesame Street, and even used the Count's voice as he did this. It was hilarious.)

Other subjects will use objects already in your house or yard: your child's slinky will be great to demonstrate wave motion in physics, and the plants and flowers you are already planting in your garden will be great for learning about parts of a plant, and about different kinds of plants. Take some beans and some popcorn from your pantry when learning about monocots and dicots. An old wire hanger, bent into a circle and the crook straightened and stuck into the ground, will give you an area to observe in your yard for an entire year. Record observations of that area, and you write what your child says if he or she is very young. Take photos. Discuss how things are changing. "How many bugs



did you find today? Let's look them up in our book to see what they are called." Make sure you do not treat that area if you are doing herbicides and pesticides or it will alter what will naturally happen. You might even want to let it grow and not cut it for a year. It's for science!



Going to a nearby park or pond weekly for a year will give you many scientific observations and discussions. You will find topics to research online and at your local library. Watch carefully the changing of the seasons with your child. In Indiana we can take full advantage of the changing seasons studying leaves, birds, and insects in the fall and spring; snow and ice in the winter; and weather all year long. Recently, we have had several lessons on tornado formation that I would have gladly missed!

Many bottles of medicine include an inexpensive little medicine cup.

You do not need all of those for medicine, so dedicate some of those to your science resources. The 5 ml, 10 ml, and 15 ml markings will be helpful when measuring substances, and in even learning to measure properly. A used dropper (cleaned very thoroughly) can be used for studying the "skin" of water, dripping water very slowly and carefully onto a penny. How many drops can you fit on a penny? It's amazing how the water bubbles up. Do it again, and touch the water with the tip of the dropper, and the "skin" breaks.



Plastic egg cartons and fruit containers and the foam containers from buying mushrooms are saved for starting plants in the spring at my house. They can also be used for experiments with plants. You can dissect your own flowers, learning the parts (including dandelions, which are obviously free.) Roly-poly bugs can be found under rocks. Ants are everywhere to watch! "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest." (Proverbs 6:6-8, KJV). Not only a science lesson, but character-training as well!

If you have really colorful flowers planted,

you may find that hummingbirds visit you. Butterflies and bees will like your flowers; you often only have to take time to observe. Your family can also join the Great Backyard Bird Count with the Audubon Society. Everything you need is on the website, including a bird guide. <http://www.audubon.org/content/about-great-backyard-bird-count>. They will be a part of collecting data for science, and that is very exciting!



My Bible was used for reading aloud and telling stories back to me, teaching the history of the world, and for memorization. As they learned to write, they copied verses simply using lined paper for ages; we later added dictation to our lessons. We learned the basics of grammar and punctuation from the verses I chose. "What words are capitalized?" or "Where is the end of the sentence? How do you know?" Or "Let's choose the nouns in this verse." And writing: "Write Psalm 23 in your own words. Compare/contrast what you wrote to the scriptures."



I found the same type of school dictionary that I had used in school at a garage sale. (Homeschool pioneers, remember Gregg Harris quipping: "God blesses those who pray.....and go to garage sales"?) In the front of the book were lessons on alphabetical order, syllabication, using the dictionary, and spelling.

I remember doing those lessons in school myself, and found that they were very helpful to my children as well. For a quarter, I found a wonderful resource that we still own.

When you are living your life and receive a stamp from another country in your mail (or an interesting United States stamp for that matter), find an interesting rock or fossil while working in the yard, a wheat penny, or a well-written article when you are reading, save them!



Old jewelry boxes (or tiny gift boxes) work great for rocks and fossils; do not forget to record where and when you found the rock and include that information in the box. Save the stamp in an envelope, and record from when and where it was received. Saving the correspondence, if possible, would also be interesting in years to come. As history and nations fluctuate, it is possible that the information in the letter or card will be very interesting in future history lessons. For pieces of writing that you want to save for the future, set up file folders labelled appropriately. I have saved throw-away menus (great for math, for writing, and for manners lessons), columns from magazines and newspapers (I love Rick Bragg's column at the back of Southern Living. He paints vivid pictures with words!), song lyrics, clean jokes, recipes (for trying together or for demonstrating to your children how to write a recipe), etc. Save examples of all kinds of writing and at every level. You may have good articles from Highlights or God's World Weekly Readers or Nature's Friend or Sports Illustrated Kids. I have a stack of Answers Magazine for Kids that I have kept--and laminated so that they will be sturdy. They are not only sources of great information for my grandchildren and children that I teach, but they are also wonderful examples of

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writing. Keep political cartoons, favorite cartoons of your family, editorials and even sayings on bumper stickers. I have a file of the artwork from the back of Reader's Digest Magazines. (Do they still do that?) They are excellent resources for discussions of modern society. I also have a file of magazine advertisements that are based on famous works of art; if you look for them, you will notice them everywhere! (It came in handy when I was in college: I had to write a paper on one of those advertisements, and I already had some examples from which to choose.) Even if your child is two and you are only thinking of homeschooling in the future, set up some file folders and start gathering examples of excellent writing for little ones through college age. You will be glad that you have these resources when you need them later.



Sometimes experiences are teaching resources as well. A child's allergy may lead to discussions of heaven, and how there will be no sickness there. A death in the family can lead to discussions of salvation and to the future when "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow,

nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away," (Revelation 21:4, KJV). Even finding a disgusting pile of trash in the park can be used to teach that God gave Adam the responsibility to care for the earth, and that each of us needs to be good stewards of the part of the earth where we live. When

children are unkind to one another as they play, use it as a time to teach them. Disciple is the root of discipline; take even their sin and use it as an opportunity for learning. One of my grandchildren came into our house one day, very excited about passing an AWANA verse that he had not worked to memorize. "You tell us that "Be kind" verse so much that I already knew it!" He was referring to Ephesians 4:32, which I often quoted to him and to his siblings when they were playing at my house. Experiences are resources that cost nothing but a bit of time to utilize.

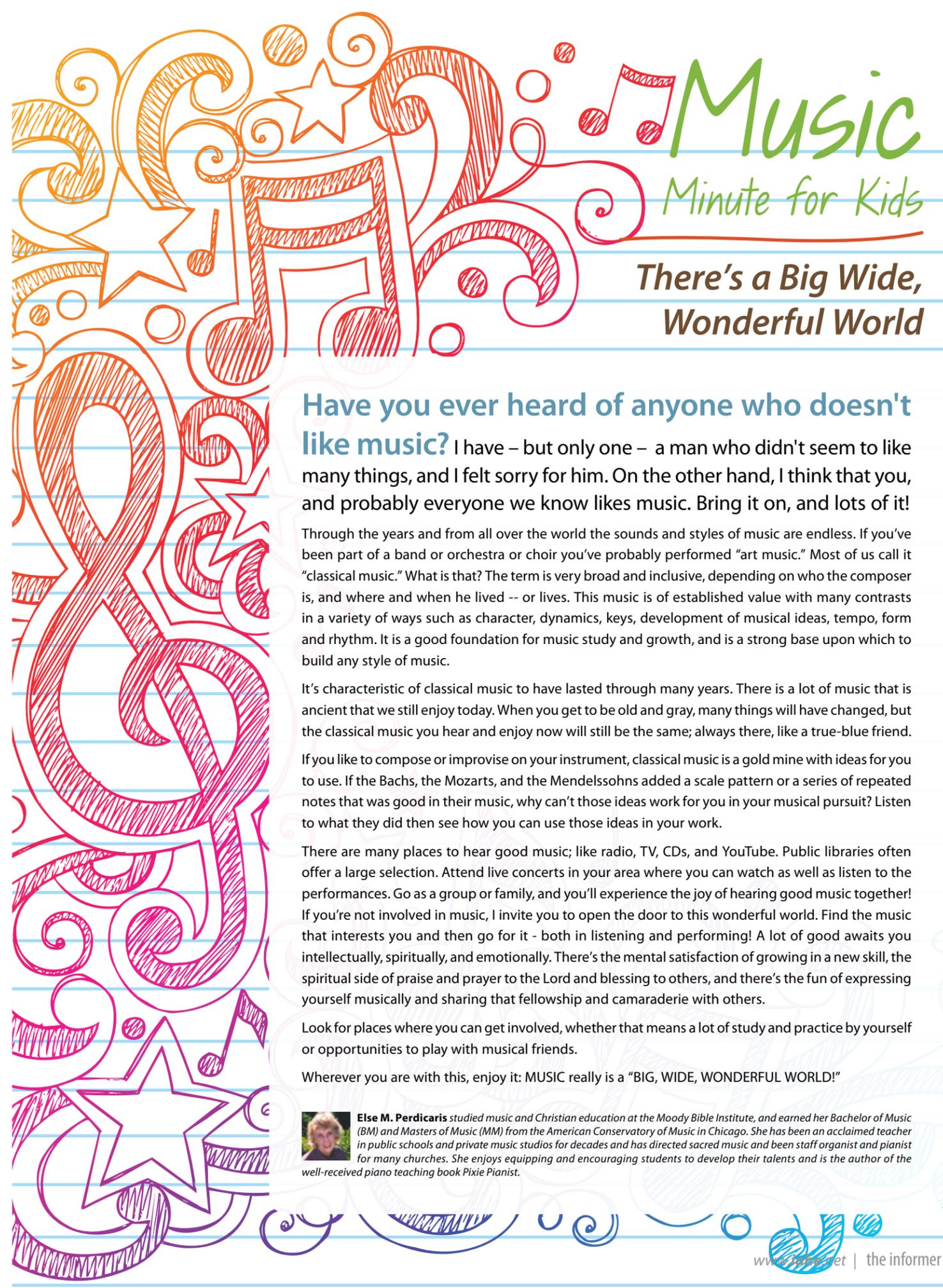
As I looked back on our homeschooling years, I realized that often our most memorable and helpful lessons came from these free or inexpensive resources. I hope that you will find that they help your family as well. Your experiences and resources may be different from mine, but always be on the lookout for teaching treasures. If you are looking, you will find them. I guarantee that your children will do their part to help you, dragging in muddy fossils, bird feathers, and their squabbles.

"And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."
 —Deuteronomy 6:7, KJV ■



Debbie Burks is a former homeschooling mom, and is now the grandmother of homeschoolers. She loves to teach, to write and to spend time with her family: her husband, Dave, her three children, and six grandchildren. Debbie teaches writing to a group of homeschoolers, and also team-teaches the Primary class at her church with her husband.

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Have you ever heard of anyone who doesn't like music? I have – but only one – a man who didn't seem to like many things, and I felt sorry for him. On the other hand, I think that you, and probably everyone we know likes music. Bring it on, and lots of it!

Through the years and from all over the world the sounds and styles of music are endless. If you've been part of a band or orchestra or choir you've probably performed "art music." Most of us call it "classical music." What is that? The term is very broad and inclusive, depending on who the composer is, and where and when he lived -- or lives. This music is of established value with many contrasts in a variety of ways such as character, dynamics, keys, development of musical ideas, tempo, form and rhythm. It is a good foundation for music study and growth, and is a strong base upon which to build any style of music.

It's characteristic of classical music to have lasted through many years. There is a lot of music that is ancient that we still enjoy today. When you get to be old and gray, many things will have changed, but the classical music you hear and enjoy now will still be the same; always there, like a true-blue friend.

If you like to compose or improvise on your instrument, classical music is a gold mine with ideas for you to use. If the Bachs, the Mozarts, and the Mendelssohns added a scale pattern or a series of repeated notes that was good in their music, why can't those ideas work for you in your musical pursuit? Listen to what they did then see how you can use those ideas in your work.

There are many places to hear good music; like radio, TV, CDs, and YouTube. Public libraries often offer a large selection. Attend live concerts in your area where you can watch as well as listen to the performances. Go as a group or family, and you'll experience the joy of hearing good music together! If you're not involved in music, I invite you to open the door to this wonderful world. Find the music that interests you and then go for it - both in listening and performing! A lot of good awaits you intellectually, spiritually, and emotionally. There's the mental satisfaction of growing in a new skill, the spiritual side of praise and prayer to the Lord and blessing to others, and there's the fun of expressing yourself musically and sharing that fellowship and camaraderie with others.

Look for places where you can get involved, whether that means a lot of study and practice by yourself or opportunities to play with musical friends.

Wherever you are with this, enjoy it: MUSIC really is a "BIG, WIDE, WONDERFUL WORLD!"



Else M. Perdicaris studied music and Christian education at the Moody Bible Institute, and earned her Bachelor of Music (BM) and Masters of Music (MM) from the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago. She has been an acclaimed teacher in public schools and private music studios for decades and has directed sacred music and been staff organist and pianist for many churches. She enjoys equipping and encouraging students to develop their talents and is the author of the well-received piano teaching book *Pixie Pianist*.

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accredited
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4-month time frame

College Courses for High School Students

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Questions? Chat with our HS advisor, Noelle Brennan! 260-399-1672, nlbrennan@taylor.edu online.taylor.edu

Diversifying the Classroom...

Literature

—Alisha Mattingly



Public school children are exposed to a wider range of individuals than children in most home school classrooms. But with some effort, we can bring diversity to the home school. Cultural appreciation and the understanding of differences can be a difficult subject to breach and teach—especially when current events prompt the lessons. One of the easiest ways to answer the tough questions while broadening students' understanding of other cultures is through literature. In addition to the classics in middle and high school, English and language arts should include a slew of writings by diverse authors. Literature has always been an influential channel through which we understand our world and each other. Why not add great writers to your teaching support team?

Studies have shown that the books we read are linked to developing empathy for and personal connections with fictional characters. Consider your favorite book. Why is it your favorite? Who is your favorite character and why? Our esteem for a book is based largely on our emotional connection with the characters.

In *"The Psychology of Fandom: Why We Get Attached to Fictional Characters,"* journalist Abby Norman writes, "One thing that helps us empathize with family and friends, no matter what our baseline capabilities to do so are, is trying to fill in the details of what we don't know about their situation." Through reading we learn intimate details about characters, including their background, life struggles, hopes and dreams, and failures and successes, that we may never learn about a person in real life. It is this intimate knowledge that broadens our perspective and allows us to reconsider our notions of others' lives. Literature helps us become intimately acquainted and thus deeply empathetic of diverse characters. In real life, this may translate to a willingness to better understand diverse peoples.

As with any literature, discussing the reading cements learning. Asking a child why he or she felt connected to the writing, even at an early age, leads to better critical thinking and comprehension.

The following are examples of books that can be used to expose learners through literature to the diverse cultures that make up the United States.

EARLY READERS

Native American Literature

Dreamcatcher – Audrey Osofsky
A simple story told through poetry and beautiful illustrations of the Ojibway Indians who wove dreamcatchers that capture nightmares so only good dreams get to the sleeper.

African American Literature

Chocolate Me – Taye Diggs
A young boy learns to accept and love his differences despite the teasing of other children.

Asian American Literature

Bee-Bim Bop – Linda Sue Park
A child helps her mother shop for and prepare ingredients for a traditional Korean dish.

Hispanic American Literature

Abuelo – Arthur Dorros
A young girl imagines she and her grandmother can fly.

1st – 2nd GRADE

Native American Literature

Crazy Horse's Vision – Joseph Bruchac
This Parents' Choice Gold Award winning book tells the story of a young Native American man who seeks a vision that will help him save his people.

African American Literature

One Word from Sophia – Jim Averbeck
The story of a young negotiator who really, really wants her one birthday wish to come true.

Asian American Literature

Hot, Hot Roti for Dada-ji – F. Zia
A little boy's grandfather is visiting from India and the boy wants to entice his grandfather, whose stories of strength have entertained him, to show off how strong he is by tasting the boy's Hot, Hot Roti dish made with mango pickle.

Hispanic American Literature

What Can You Do with a Paleta – Carmen Tafolla
A charming story about the wonders of the paleta, a Mexican popsicle.

3rd – 5th GRADE

Native American Literature

Death of the Iron Horse – Paul Goble
A tale of the only derailing of a train by Native American people. The Cheyenne saw the train as a threat to their way of life that they bravely sought to protect.

African American Literature

Maritcha: A Nineteenth-Century American Girl – Tonya Bolden
Based on the memoirs of Maritcha Rimond Lyons, the story follows a young African American girl who was born free during the time of slavery and her fight to attend an all-white school.

Asian American Literature

Blackbird Fly – Erin Entrada Kelly
Twelve-year-old Apple and her mother emigrate from the Philippines to Louisiana and Apple struggles with being different from her classmates and staying connected with her heritage.

Hispanic American Literature

Esperanza Rising – Pam Munoz Ryan
The story of an affluent Mexican girl who immigrates to America and must work as a migrant worker.

6th – 8th GRADE

Native American Literature

Sees Behind Trees – Michael Dorris
This book doubles as Native American literature and a lesson in acceptance of others' differences, as a young near-sighted boy struggles to achieve in archery, the same as the other children. He earns a new name when he is able to use his other senses in a way no one else can.

African American Literature

Crossover – Kwame Alexander
This 2015 Newbery Medal Winner is the story of 12-year-old African American twins who learn a lot about growing up both on and off the court. The story is told in sensational verse that captures the young reader's attention.

Asian American Literature

Ninjas, Piranhas, and Galileo – Greg Leitich Smith
This comedic look at middle school life involves three diverse friends who get caught up in the drama of seventh grade.

Hispanic American Literature

Return to Sender – Julia Alvarez
Two lives intersect as Mari's illegal migrant worker family finds work among desperate dairy farmers in Vermont.

HIGH SCHOOL

Native American Literature

Waterlily – Ella Cara Deloria
A young adult novel about the intricacies of kinship and unity among the Native American people. After tragedy befalls a main character, a different kind of family is established through adoption into a new tribe.

African American Literature

The First Part Last – Angela Johnson
A teen boy's carefree life comes to a screeching halt when he learns he is going to be a father and must care for his baby.

Asian American Literature

Girl in Translation – Jean Kwok
A teenage Chinese immigrant leads a double life as a brilliant student and a sweatshop worker, straddling the line between extreme poverty, the weight of her family, and what to do with her ambition and talent.

Hispanic American Literature

Drown – Junot Diaz
This collection of 10 tales follows people from the Dominican Republic to the urban areas of New Jersey, and chronicles the attempts of the Dominican immigrants in recreating and redefining their place in society. ■

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ABCs & 123s

Teaching Your Young One in Indiana

- Amanda Runge

Congratulations! You are the parent of a child old enough for school. Go ahead and have a good cry—your baby is just growing up all too quickly. It's worse if this isn't your oldest kiddo, but let's not get into how old they are, let's just focus on your preschooler or kindergartner.

When most folks think of teaching a preschooler, they envision an active 3-4 year old. Images of miniature primary colored desks and chairs float in their heads, a little timer for measuring class time, and the first "off to school" photo, complete with an oversized backpack that reaches their smiling child's knees. However, did you know that that isn't the path that every toddler takes? Especially if they're home educated, there are many caveats to this vision of your young baby's maiden educational voyage.

Not everyone knows, but Indiana's compulsory age is 7 years of age. That means you don't have to focus on what passes as traditional schoolwork complete with workbooks for a few more years. Let's say it together--whew! Your baby can stay your baby for a while longer!

Does that mean they shouldn't be allowed to even look at a schoolbook for another four years? It seems like this is going to put them at a great disadvantage from their workbook wielding peers. However, research has shown that students who begin formal education later have no trouble catching up or exceeding their classmates who started earlier. Plus, they frequently have a love of learning that the "fast track" students seem to lack as time goes on.

For you parents of little boys, this is especially excellent news. Frequently mothers are pulling their hair out trying to figure out ways to help their naturally active sons to just sit still and learn! Boys mature at a slower rate than girls, and many just simply aren't ready for sitting still and learning new information. They try and focus all of their attention on being still! Allow them to stand and match letters at a table, or jump on a small trampoline and count as they jump. Let them be active! That's the beauty of homeschooling; you can make it work for you.

Use this precious time with your child for a few things, one of which is instilling a love for learning. Counting out loud the number of snaps on their onesie or pjs isn't "math," nor is counting the scoops of flour going into your cookie recipe. During bath time, my husband would countdown to when he poured the water on our daughter's head--and now she counts backward 3-2-1 all on her own at two years old. She surprised me even one day by skip counting when I was saying out loud the number of beads I was counting out for a bracelet I was making. I didn't "teach" her that, but she was soaking up the information like a sponge.

There doesn't need to be a formal time for learning to read. Your toddler doesn't need to know that reading them books throughout the day is actually "school." Providing them with letters to match, whether you start with identical letters, or progress to upper & lower case

matches, allows them to start to recognize the letter shapes. You can have a pan of shaving cream for them to trace letters into as well. This helps with fine motor skills as well letter recognition. Finding "outside the box" ways of learning is especially wonderful news for parents who are concerned that their four year old still can't hold a crayon correctly. Give them time, and help them hone their fine motor skills in other ways.

What's most important to me for my children to learn during this time in their life is character. Of course, that is something that they will always be working on for the rest of their lives, but these years will lay the foundation for how they learn and mature down the road. We work on first-time obedience, having a happy heart, and thinking of others, putting their needs first. My eldest daughter continues to amaze me when she shows such compassion for those around her, even when she isn't quite three yet. Taking the time to work on good character traits at these young ages will not make homeschooling (or even parenting) a walk in the park, but it will make it much easier than if they are not cultivated purposefully, and allowed to flounder.

So cherish these fleeting years with your preschooler, and don't focus on getting him ready for college, at least not in the traditional academic sense. After all, we homeschoolers are frequently teaching our children at home because we don't like the current school situation they would typically be in. We don't need to replicate what the brick and mortar mass education establishments are doing in our own homes; we have the freedom to do things our way, in the manner that will best suit our little ones. This is especially true in the years when they are not even required to be in school yet. That is truly the best thing about homeschooling. ■

 **Amanda Runge** works at home part-time as a graphic designer, and received her B.A. from Northern Kentucky University. She has been the Design Director for The Informer since 2011, as well as In YOUR Corner since January 2017, a publication for those with Parkinson's from Rock Steady Boxing, Inc. She is married to Kyle, and is mother to two adorable little girls. She was home educated from kindergarten through high school and looks forward to formally teaching her children in the upcoming years. Photo Credit: Images by Sadie (www.imagesbysadie.com)

2017 LEGISLATIVE WRAP-UP

DEBI KETRON

HEA 1384 Various Education Matters

Representative Robert Behning (R – Indianapolis)

This session, IAHE was asked to testify in the House and the Senate in regards to the “push out” problem where the public and some accredited private schools encouraged problem students to “homeschool” in order to protect the school’s A-F state accountability grade. A legislator claimed in committee meetings that 13,000 students/year had reported enrollment to homeschool in Indiana. Schools encouraged a number of these families to “homeschool,” even though the parent did not initiate it. IAHE has fielded many phone calls from these families who were classified by the school as a “homeschooler” and then given IAHE’s phone number to help them get started. As our IAHE Regional Representatives counseled these families, and the parent came to understand what is involved in home education, many parents decided home education was not a good fit for their family. It is unlikely that these students were ever removed from the homeschool classification.

In an attempt to curtail this practice, HEA 1384 contains language that prohibits a school from classifying a student as a homeschooler unless the school has substantial evidence that the parent or guardian of the student initiated the student leaving the public high school or an accredited nonpublic high school. The Indiana Department of

Education may require the school to produce this evidence if it is ever requested. It will be important for the school to have evidence in writing that the parent initiated a transfer to homeschooling.

The State Board will also consider the mobility of high school students who are credit deficient, and whether any high school should be rewarded for enrolling credit deficient students or penalized for transferring out credit deficient students. We hope this bill helps to curtail the practice of pushing out credit deficient students, so they can receive the help they need. As strong proponents of homeschooling, the IAHE knows the work and dedication it requires. We also recognize that it is not the appropriate choice for all students.

HEA 1003 Student Assessments

Representative Robert Behning (R – Indianapolis)

This bill replaces ISTEP after June 30, 2018, with a new statewide assessment to be known as Indiana’s Learning Evaluation Assessment Readiness Network (ILEARN). The original language in the bill required all students in public, charter, state accredited nonpublic, and voucher schools to take the assessment. The original language would have required any homeschooler who was enrolled for one class in a school listed above to take the assessment. IAHE Action worked with Representative Behning and Senator Kruse

to amend the language to require full-time enrolled students to take the assessment instead of all enrolled students. Note that a homeschooler enrolled in a public school class must take the end of course assessment associated with the class.

HEA 1004 Pre-Kindergarten Education

Representative Robert Behning (R – Indianapolis)

HEA 1004 is a preschool bill that expands taxpayer funding for institutional preschool. It expanded the state preschool program to an additional 15 counties and added a possible option for an in-home technology-based program for pre-k.

This bill:

- “Requires the department of education...to approve an early learning development framework for prekindergarten.”

- Develops a program to reimburse parents for technology-based, in-home early education services to a child. This program costs between \$1,000 and \$2,000/child depending if the family has internet access. (Homeschoolers informed us there is a similar preschool program that is free, and other programs that are much cheaper. Will these free/inexpensive programs continue to exist as companies see that they can instead choose to sell their software to the government for \$1000 per child? How many parents will reduce their use of local libraries as they opt for an online program promoted by the state?)

- This program uses personalized learning. The software assesses the child’s progress at key milestones to determine what type of instruction each child will receive. The program includes a parental engagement and involvement component. From the program’s website, it states, “Every family is partnered with a Personal Care Representative who monitors their child’s progress throughout the year. Families will be contacted if their child’s usage falls below guidelines.”

- Students who use the program will be required to be a part of a longitudinal study to determine achievement levels in kindergarten and later years. It must include a comparison of test and assessment results in grade 3 of the children who received in-home early education services; and a control group that consists of children who did not receive in-home early education services.

IAHE is concerned about the lack of long-term results from institutional preschool and particularly concerned about technology-based preschool. The increased use of taxpayer funding weakens communities by making it more difficult for those who take personal responsibility for teaching their own children to stay home on one income, and by replacing the use of libraries and local bookstores.

IAHE also has concerns about personalized learning via computer, especially for young children. Parents are fully capable of preparing their children for kindergarten without oversight. Families already have local libraries, which offer free books and multiple educational programs. We believe a parent who reads to his or her child on their lap will have better results than a child watching the pages of a book turning on a screen. We believe there would be long-term positive results if the State would encourage parents to prepare their young

children for school without relying on institutional-based state support. Doing so would strengthen the family and strengthen our communities.

HEA 1005 Superintendent of Public Instruction

Speaker of the House Brian Bosma (R – Indianapolis)

Before January 1, 2021, the Superintendent of Public Instruction will be elected. HEA 1005 abolishes the office of the state Superintendent of Public Instruction after January 10, 2025. The governor will then appoint a Secretary of Education who will serve at the pleasure of and at a salary determined by the governor. This does not require a change to the State Constitution.

SEA 198 Career and Technical Education

Senator Ryan Mishler (R – Bremen)

IAHE and IAHE Action vigilantly watch for opportunities to prevent discrimination of homeschool graduates. SEA 198 presented an avenue to allow high school seniors or graduates of nonaccredited, nonpublic schools to have equal standing with high school seniors or graduates of other Indiana schools to apply for a high-value Workforce Ready Grant. The student must be enrolled in an eligible certificate program at Ivy Tech or Vincennes University at least half-time. They must be financially independent of their parents, not eligible for any state financial aid program, and maintain adequate academic progress. The applicant must not have previously received a baccalaureate degree, an associate degree, or an eligible certificate.

The amount of a high-value workforce ready credit-bearing grant is equal to the amount of the educational costs of the institution that the applicant is attending excluding other financial assistance. An applicant may use the high-value workforce ready credit-bearing grant only to pay the educational costs of courses required for the applicant’s certificate program. The duration may not exceed the lesser of two undergraduate academic years; or the number of credit hours required by the eligible certificate program in which the student is enrolled. A high-value workforce ready credit-bearing grant may be renewed if the student maintains satisfactory academic progress while receiving the grant, and is enrolled in an eligible certificate program that requires more than twelve (12) credit hours or its equivalent.

SEA 175 Healthcare Consent

Senator Jean Leising (R – Rushville)

IAHE Action amended this bill to protect parental rights. This bill would have allowed a grandparent to sign a health care consent instead of a parent if a parent is not reasonably available. We believed the original language was not strong enough. IAHE Action included an amendment that stated one must first ascertain a parent, guardian or adult sibling is unavailable.

To receive legislative updates via email during the legislative session, sign up at <http://iaheaction.net/stay-informed/>

Nothing in this article shall be construed as legal advice. ■



DEBI KETRON and her husband graduated four children from their home school. They were involved in homeschool leadership in Dearborn County, IN for many years. She was a former IAHE Region 8 Representative with her husband Phil, and currently serves as the IAHE Director of Government Affairs and on the Board of Directors for Indiana Association of Home Educators (IAHE) and IAHE Action.

2017 IAHE CONVENTION PHOTO RECAP



OUR CONVENTION COMMITTEE



OUR REPS



OUR BOARD

Thank you to our convention photographers for documenting our wonderful weekend!
Oscar Corral, Malissa Malicoat, Lisa & Marissa Pieper, Noah Prail, & Amanda Runge
Want to see your photos in next year's Informer?
Contact us at [volunteer@iahe.net!](mailto:volunteer@iahe.net)

Expressions!

A Creative Arts Contest



Writing Contest Winners & Prizes

- 1st Place & Champion: Lauren Warner (Ages 7-10)
- 1st Place: Caleb Wright (Ages 11-14)
- 1st Place: Hannah Creekmore (Ages 15-19)
- 2nd Place: Faith Sydow (Ages 7-10)
- 2nd Place: Dahlia Goeglein (Ages 11-14)
- 2nd Place: Caleb Weaver (Ages 15-19)
- 3rd Place: Timothy Blattert (Ages 7-10)
- 3rd Place: David Hallett (Ages 11-14)
- 3rd Place: Danielle Anderson (Ages 15-19)

Art Contest Winners

- 1st Place: Madeline Vida (Ages 7-10)
- 1st Place & Champion: Aubrey Branch (Ages 11-14)
- 1st Place: Kristin Branch (Ages 15-19)
- 2nd Place: Kaitlin Flewelling (Ages 7-10)
- 2nd Place: Riley Schauer (Ages 11-14)
- 2nd Place: Ezekiel Frederickson (Ages 15-19)
- 3rd Place: Andrew Blattert (Ages 7-10)
- 3rd Place: Heidi Blattert (Ages 11-14)
- 3rd Place: Annie Mounsithiraj (Ages 15-19)

Photography Contest Winners

- 1st Place: Jubilee Georgen (Ages 7-10)
- 1st Place: Abby Warner (Ages 11-14)
- 1st & Champion: Naomi Dumitrescu (Ages 15-19)
- 2nd Place: Josiah Georgen (Ages 7-10)
- 2nd Place: Madison Flewelling (Ages 11-14)
- 2nd Place: Olivia Eaker (Ages 15-19)
- 3rd Place: Benjamin Hallett (Ages 7-10)
- 3rd Place: Liliana Georgen (Ages 11-14)
- 3rd Place: Makinzie Nies (Ages 15-19)

Video Contest Winners

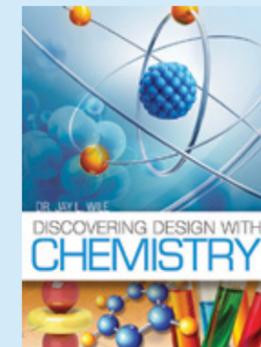
- 1st Place & Champion: John Jordan (Junior)



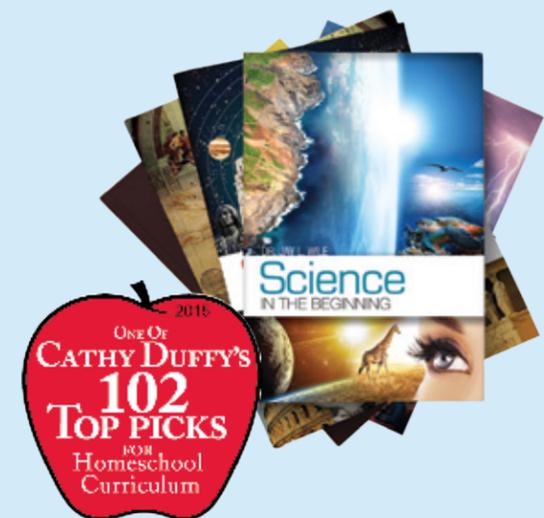
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Photos by Lisa & Marissa Pieper

build critical thinkers

Large Family Homeschooling: Minimalist Style

—Ruth Agbolosoo

You read that correctly.

“Large family,” “homeschooling,” and “minimalist” are all there together. The three, coexisting together, sort of like the trinity? Okay, maybe that is a bit of a stretch. You may be wondering about this phenomenon or you may have discovered it and already embrace this way of life. The main benefits you can experience as a large homeschooling family living the minimalist lifestyle are, more time to spend enjoying your family and saving your sanity with a more peaceful environment.

Perhaps you are a homeschool convention buff who tours convention halls looking for great deals on curricula for your brood or maybe you just enjoy a great used book sale. Whatever your means of acquiring them, if you are a homeschooler, you have books. How else can you give the best possible education to your children? You have to have curriculum for every subject and lots and lots of books... Or do you?

depositphotos.com: #36825619

Becoming a minimalist can free up time devoted to cleaning and organizing, and provide more time for free learning and enjoying more time together as a family.

Many homeschoolers struggle with clutter. There is a common belief in the homeschooling community that “more is more.” For a family with over four children, a home can easily get overrun by too many great books and curricula. The worst part of the whole thing is the fact that many well-meaning parents purchase curriculum and pleasure books on a whim and end up with curricula they don’t use. Don’t be alarmed! No one is peeking through your windows; it’s just so common an occurrence that it has become a part of the norm for homeschoolers all across America.

Unless you live in a mansion, you have probably experienced a lack of storage space, having to schedule time to clean and arrange curricula and books, or having books that you just don’t need. To solve this problem you have probably gone to a used book sale to sell some of your things just to return home with a sack full of someone else’s. It’s a sometimes fun and potentially distressing cycle; a hamster wheel of sorts.

There is good news! You don’t have to live like that to homeschool. Even with a large family you can embrace a minimalist lifestyle. It may sound impossible, but it is certainly doable. The first thing to note is that you don’t have to have a lot of books or boxed curricula to homeschool effectively. Less can actually be more when it comes to minimalism. Becoming a minimalist can free up time devoted to cleaning and organizing, and provide more time for free learning and enjoying more time together as a family.

If you have been wondering how to get started living this lifestyle, here are some tips that you can employ to help you get started:

- **If you have not purchased your curriculum for the next school year, consider making a list of your wants and needs in a curriculum before shopping. Whether you decide to shop online, in a store, at a convention, or a used book sale, this tip can help you afford impulse shopping.**

- **If you have curriculum you are not currently using, consider selling it instead of saving it for a younger child (it may not work well for the next child anyway, or you may find something you like better).**
- **Get rid of most (if not all) books that you can check out of your local library.**
- **Get rid of curricula that is incomplete (you know, the ones you were planning to get the missing workbooks for, or other components that you can’t use the curriculum without).**
- **When choosing curriculum, choose ones that can be supplemented by internet resources and/or library materials. That way you are likely to have less bulky boxes lying around.**
- **Choose curriculum that you can use for more than one child at a time. The ability to just scale down or elaborate on a lesson plan based on grade level or age can not only save space, but also saves money.**

The above are just tips to get you started with homeschooling your large family while embracing a minimalist lifestyle. You may come up with some other things to do to start paring down your items and making homeschool curriculum choices that will aid you with your minimalism goal.

Final note, if you are struggling to let go of your things, remember the benefits of living a minimalist lifestyle. You can free up more time to spend enjoying your family and save your sanity. Why not get started today? You can do it! ■



Ruth Agbolosoo has homeschooled for 14 years and loves spending time with her family. She is mom to an eighteen-year-old girl, and three boys, eight, five and three. She holds a Masters Degree in Marriage and Family Therapy, is a home-based therapist, real estate investor and book consultant at www.c4507.myubam.com.

Careful, creative, and consistent wing clippings



A few years ago, I asked my pastor this question...

How do you raise teens to not have an over-developed sense of entitlement?

In a society submerged in excess, I am still as tired today of the mire and the muck as I was the day I sought his wisdom. I want to be above the trappings of this world and I want the same for my children. I know the pressure is great to have the newest electronics, wear the latest fashion, and travel to the most exotic places. Things haven't changed much since that Sunday when I struggled with knowing how to raise our children to fly well in this world.

My pastor's answer?

Careful, creative, and consistent wing clippings.

Careful wing clippings

When our son was in high school, there was nothing he liked more than to spread his wings. At 6'3", his wingspan took up a lot of space. As a teenager, though, his wings were not fully developed. He didn't have the knowledge, wisdom, or life experience to always make good, informed decisions. His wings were not ready to fly. We were raising a man and we wanted those wings to grow and develop to be strong and to carry him far. Sometimes we had to clip the wayward feathers that were growing in the wrong direction to allow his wings the time needed to strengthen and mature. The goal is to clip, not bleed. It's not always fun, but it is always necessary.

These years later, our son is a man. The wing clipping time is done. His wings are strong and he is flying well. He will make mistakes along his journey, but I am confident that his wings will carry him far.

Creative wing clippings

Let's face it... even the idea of clipping our children's wings is daunting. The actual task borders on overwhelming. Gone are the

days of sitting them in a time-out chair or putting them to bed early. With two teens now out of the house and one more in the beginning of this journey, we are tired. However, now is not the time to be giving up. Instead, it's the time to get creative and find suitable consequences to poor decisions. Sometimes a wing-clipping is an extra chore, or a fee for forgetting something. Other times, it's us making the unpopular decision to not allow our daughter to attend an event. Either way, the most effective wing clipping is creative. Often the creative wing clippings are the ones most remembered. Over thirty years ago, my parents rescinded my keys and my driver's license for two weeks for a bad choice I made as a dumb sixteen-year-old. I've never forgotten it. At the time, it taught me to choose better. Later, that same lesson taught me to be creative in finding consequences that fit the offense.

One of my favorite creative wing clippings was when my son forgot his sack lunch for football practice and called begging me to bring him food. The creative wing clipping for forgetting and requiring more of my time was a date. He gave his time and money and bought me lunch out. We had a great time, he learned forgetting his sack lunch is expensive and I was blessed with time with him.

Consistent wing clippings

Honestly, this is the hardest part for me. Thankfully, God knew my weakness and paired me with a consistent man. My man can repeat an instruction twenty times without raising his voice or changing his tone. He can clip the same wayward feather of a wing over and over again without getting frustrated. I've watched him do this with our youngest who mastered the art of arguing at an early age.

It's the "sense of entitlement" feather on our kids' wings that seems to grow the fastest. It's a wild one... never satiated, always wanting more. When we are paying attention and are consistent, we can keep that wild feather in check without a lot of trauma or drama. It's when I let that go, though, that it gets ugly 'round these parts. Consistency is key.

By carefully, creatively, and consistently clipping their wings, rather than giving in to their every fancy, we are strengthening their wings to fly straight and true.

I wish I could tell you that I heeded my pastor's words every day, or even every other day. There were so many times I was reckless and urgent in my wing clipping. I didn't do it right every time and my kids have heart scars to show for it. But, the greatest gift of raising children isn't about wing clipping and piles of feathers. Instead, it's the love you have for your children and the love they have for you.

Love covers a multitude of mistakes and forgiveness leaves piles of grace.

These years later, I am so grateful for the wisdom of my pastor and the gift of his words. I am now in the season of watching two of my three fly straight and true and am grateful for the adventure of being their mom.

Do you not know?

Have you not heard?

*The Lord is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.*

*He will not grow tired or weary,
and His understanding no one can fathom.*

*He gives strength to the weary
and increases the power of the weak.*

*Even youths grow tired and weary,
and young men stumble and fall;*

*but those who hope in the Lord
will renew their strength.*

*They will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.*

Isaiah 40:28-31 ■



Heidi Kreider is from Winona Lake. She and her husband Chad have been married 23 years and are the parents of three incredible people. Together they have homeschooled for fifteen years and have experienced public school, private school, and homeschool with their three kids. In May, her oldest married his best friend and her second child graduated from their homeschool, which leaves just one more at home. Spending time at church, camping, and traveling with her family are her favorite hobbies. In her spare time, Heidi works as a part-time social media manager and occasionally writes at Her Heart's at Home: Helping Women Find Work-at-Home Opportunities.



SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS in the Middle

- TARA BENTLEY

When our oldest daughter was four years old, we had never heard of homeschooling. That fall, we did what was expected of us when we marched ourselves down to the local public school and enrolled her in Kindergarten.

Our years in the public school system included the usual ups and downs that most families experience... until sixth grade. Suddenly, we found a breaking point with the school and began searching for alternatives. No one was more shocked than us when we made the announcement that we were going to homeschool.

Our youngest daughter was still a preschooler. With one child that spent seven years in the public school and one that never went beyond a couple of months at the local preschool, our experiences with our two girls were very different. Looking back, it is easy to see that moving from public school to homeschooling in the middle school years presented a unique set of challenges.

Are you beginning your journey in the middle?

Recognize that the longer your child has been in a traditional school, the stronger your expectations and theirs will be of what "school" looks like. It takes time to shake these false expectations and reimagine what EDUCATION looks like.

TOP TEN TIPS for Starting in the Middle

1. RELAX and start slowly.

The temptation to recreate school-at-home will be strong. While it is helpful to create a dedicated space in your home, there is no need to load the spare bedroom with school desks or a flag pole. Home education happens at the kitchen table, the living room couch, or on a blanket in the back yard.

Avoid the mindset of a traditional school calendar or daily schedule. Don't start your year with too many subjects at one time, or set your schedule based on when the school bus goes up and down your street.

Letting go of this traditional school mindset is called "deschooling," and it takes time. Celebrate NOT Back to School Week as a way to start your year and to serve as a reminder for your whole family that you are breaking old habits and starting new ones.

2. Realize that YOU have more homework than your student.

In your first year, read, read, and read some more. Find books, blogs, podcasts, and workshop recordings about home education, parenting, learning styles, curriculum, discipleship, and more. Remember that your goal is NOT to learn each academic subject, but to find the best method to help your student learn.

3. Focus on family relationships.

When a parent becomes the teacher, principal, guidance counselor, and bus driver all rolled into one, it can be easy to feel overwhelmed. These additional tasks can leave little room for winsome parenting. Focus on character and relationship building before grades. Traditional schools emphasize testing knowledge, while home education allows us to shift our assessment of what our student knows when we work closely with them to "know what they know." Tests can still be helpful to identify understanding, retention, or learning gaps... but they shouldn't be the driving force as you are both still finding your way.

4. Be intentional with friendships.

Cultivating quality friendships in the teen years can be difficult, even in the best situation. Making the shift from public school to homeschooling at this time of life adds additional challenges. Talk with your spouse and your children to decide which current friendships are a priority. Are these relationships healthy? Or, will they bring a discontented spirit into your home during the transition? Open communication is the key to making wise decisions.

Building connections in the homeschooling community won't come quickly, but new relationships for students and mom will help tremendously. Find a local support group and attend activities that allow you to get to know people.

Recognize that while finding support is vital, joining a co-op is not. What's the difference? While many groups offer a bit of both, support groups focus on building community, social events, and field trips, while co-ops focus on academic classes for the student.

Homeschool pioneer, textbook author, and college professor, Dr. Jay Wile recently shared: "Co-ops are not necessary. In fact, for most homeschooled students, I would say too many co-op classes end up being a negative. One of the reasons homeschool graduates were my best university students is because they learned WITHOUT the benefit of a class. They learned on their own. If you do too much in a co-op, your children will not learn that way. Co-ops are great for certain classes, but an over-reliance on them takes away one of the biggest strengths that homeschooling provides."

5. Don't be a book snob.

I attended our first homeschool convention before we started homeschooling in 2001. At that time, the self-publishing industry was small, and color printing was far more expensive than black and white. I will never forget my attitude as I walked the exhibit hall literally judging each book by its cover. I was convinced that a quality education required books that looked like what was in the public school. I wasted time, money, and energy in our early years by choosing materials for all of the wrong reasons.

The homeschool marketplace is full of excellent, quality materials. From high-tech, online courses, to low-tech, black and white, classic books. There are pros and cons to both. While it is tempting to grab an all-in-one curriculum solution for your first year, be sure to pick a couple of subjects using something outside-of-the-box. Take a balanced approach to your curriculum choices as it takes time to learn what materials work best for your family. Choosing one methodology for all subjects can lead to very monotonous days.

6. Write a mission statement for your homeschool.

Chances are good... you will have difficult days and there will be tears along the way. During the rough days, it will be tempting to give up if you've lost sight of why you decided to homeschool in the first place. Write down your reasons and post it in a place you'll see every day.

Are you beginning your journey in the middle?

7. Stay flexible.

Life rarely goes as planned. Leave space in your calendar and lesson planner for things that will take longer than you expect. Leave room for field trips, trips to the grocery store, bad curriculum choices, family time, and more. It's easy to start the school year with high expectations of how much is possible to accomplish in a year. I remember sitting down and planning an entire semester at a time... in ink! Oh, my! I set myself up for failure in our first week. Are you a planner? Create a separate list of goals and only move completed tasks to your student's lesson book once they are completed.

8. Plan a GENERAL route to High School.

The beauty of homeschooling is the ability to customize your student's education. This freedom creates a lot of room for options along the way. But, jumping into home education in the middle school years also means keeping an eye on the line of when middle school ends and high school begins. Curriculum placement tests are only one piece of the puzzle. What learning gaps does your student need to tackle before high school? Or, are they ready for a challenge? Identify any priorities for the years ahead to give your student a strong foundation.

Include your student in this process. Remember that their understanding of your family's long term goals will help reduce friction during the rough days.



9. Keep extra-curricular activities to a minimum.

In spite of the success and growth of home education in today's world, many new families still enter this journey leery of turning their child into an "unsocialized homeschooler." Chances are good that your public school student was in an after-school club, played a new sport each quarter, and started learning an instrument in band. Learning how home education works in your family takes time. Don't load your family's calendar down with outside activities in an effort to fight a false stereotype.

10. Don't seek outside affirmation.

We all want to know when we're doing a good job, and homeschooling is no exception. Leaving the traditional school model behind also means making a shift in how we evaluate success. Moving from weekly tests and report cards, to relational learning, means we don't always have a tangible yardstick of how we are doing. Seeking the approval of others too early in our journey can lead to discontentment, and comparing our student to others, instead of focusing on their actual progress.

Don't let other people grill your children. Well-intentioned family members may choose to put your efforts to the test. Have a prepared answer ready to put an end to an uncomfortable situation for everyone.

BONUS TIP -

11. Home education is a marathon, not a sprint.

Give yourself enough time to find what works. Your first year will be full of mistakes and rough days, so make a two-year commitment to this new journey.

And, give yourself the grace to fall behind before you learn how to fly. ■



Tara Bentley is a veteran homeschool mom of two daughters, and has one grandson. During 13 years of homeschooling, she and her husband Mark served in leadership for 12. They currently serve together on the Board of Directors for Indiana Association of Home Educators (IAHE), where Tara also serves as the Executive Director.

An intelligent heart acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.

Proverbs 18:15



IAHE Leaders' Conference

Thursday, June 15th

1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

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Featuring:

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The Homeschool CPA

Debi Ketron

IAHE Government Affairs Director

Tara Bentley

IAHE Executive Director

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Liberty vs. Freedom

—Tom Washburne, IN State Representative

During the recent IAHE Action Government Affairs panel

at the 2016 IAHE Convention, State Representative Tom Washburne (R-HD 64 Evansville) mentioned there is a difference between freedom and liberty. We asked him if he would share his thoughts with home educators.

“Give me freedom, or give me death!” — right? Wrong. We all know that when Patrick Henry of Virginia made his famous speech before the War for Independence with England, what he really said was, “Give me *liberty*, or give me death!” Now some may say: “So what? Who cares?” Well, we all need to care, for these are two very different statements with very different implications.

Let’s first consider the concept of freedom — the ability to do whatever it is that we want to do. Note the word “whatever” in my definition, because herein is the problem with freedom: it has no associated value system. There is no real right or wrong. If an action feels good to you, your “freedom” allows you to do it. Kris Kristofferson (through Janice Joplin) nailed this meaning of freedom in his hit song Me and Bobby McGee:

*“Freedom’s just another word for nothin’ left to lose,
And nothin’ ain’t worth nothin’ but it’s free...”*

You see, if there is no value, no right and wrong associated with freedom, then what we end up with is a collection of valueless actions, and conflict will be inevitable. In such conflicts, who is to say who wins? Ultimately, the government wins, through lawyers, judges, and litigation — the power of the sword. But the government will have its own world view, which may or may not agree with yours or have at its base any concept of enduring values. I think that this is why we have seen such frustration with the explosion in the number of lawsuits in the last few decades. People are losing the ability to resolve conflict on their own and are turning to a more and more valueless court system for answers.

In contrast to freedom is the concept of liberty. Liberty is like freedom in that it maintains that humans have choices. But liberty also has with it an element of values, right and wrong. Yes, people enjoy a sort of freedom in liberty, but it is a self-constrained freedom. A society based on liberty voluntarily limits available actions to commonly accepted views of morality, or as John Locke put it, operates within the bounds of natural law. Accordingly, when values conflict in a society based on the concept of liberty, it is not solely the government that dictates the outcome, but instead the broader, deeper principles that the people hold dear.

Like John Locke, America’s founders loved liberty. Indeed, they based our society on it. They spoke of liberty often in terms of self-government. For them, what we today call the government is only half of what they referred to as government. They saw another form of government at work in America: the duty and ability of Americans to govern themselves. In the words of John Adams: “We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge, or gallantry, would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”

If you have read this far, you may be saying to yourself, “Wait a minute, if liberty depends on values, then there must be different forms of liberty depending on the values in play,” and you are correct. In addition, it must be pointed out that some societies will not support liberty at all. Value systems which support liberty are said to be systems which maintain the conditions of freedom.

“...if there is no value, no right and wrong associated with freedom, then what we end up with is a collection of valueless actions, and conflict will be inevitable.”

In the United States, we have simply taken it for granted that when given freedom, society will flourish. We accordingly fail to realize that freedom is only possible where the values of the society support the conditions necessary for freedom to work as intended. In other words, giving freedom is not enough. Without a value structure that also gives rise to liberty, a society will fail.

At the founding of the United States, Christianity was the dominate culture of the people, and Christianity provided the foundation for liberty. In such liberty, America has flourished without heavy government intervention. Remember, “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (2 Cor. 3:17). Note the contrast of this with the recent experience in Iraq where a well-intentioned imposition of freedom through war has resulted not in a prospering society but rather in chaos. The reason? These countries have inherent cultures that give little support to liberty or even freedom.

I should add that one virtue at the time of America’s founding was that minority voices should be tolerated. Put another way, in the Christian view of liberty true free speech, free association and free exercise of religion are to be respected. But with this toleration of dissension, there was and is the risk that some other culture can use these rights to emerge from obscurity. And should that culture get strong enough, it could even gain control of government and curtail the very values that gave it life. God help us should such a culture prove hostile to Christianity.

Every generation of Americans must be mindful and recognize that our original Constitution was built on Christian liberty. Should we drift from this concept of liberty to a concept of freedom, there is a danger that the exercise of these freedoms will actually undermine the system of government that recognized them. In other words, we must teach our children that there is right and wrong, there are values, and that these values are critical to ourselves, our families, our churches, and, yes, our government. Indeed, America as we know it depends upon true liberty. ■



Tom Washburne, J.D., Indiana State Representative District 64

Homeschool Humor



The faculty and staff at my son's school are on strike.

The administration is silent, as usual for the time of day. The cafeteria staff have stated that they are no longer able to handle the all-day access to the kitchen by students. "It seems like we just clean up from breakfast and it's time to start lunch!" stated the cafeteria matron. "Then, when lunch is finished, we see students looking in the refrigerator for more food! We've tried to explain to the students that we have a limited budget, but it just seems to fall on deaf ears."

When I asked a member of the faculty about student teacher issues, she responded, "You know I see the same pattern every year. We start the school year strong, but this time of year all we hear from the students are whining and complaints. Even when I try and mix things up with fun projects that I think the kids would love, I still get the same tepid response."

I asked her if she has seen the same response for seven years, what happened this year. "Well, the cafeteria and teaching staff decided that if the kids were going to check-out this year, so were we!!! It's been great watching the students in the kitchen looking puzzled at a rubber scraper and saucepan! I mean the instructions for Mac and Cheese are right there on the box! Eventually they understood and were quite capable of feeding themselves! Now they understand that the pantry and refrigerator hold INGREDIENTS, and ingredients are what is used to make food!"

When asked if the teacher had any encouraging words for other schools that might be facing the same situation, she replied, "Stay strong!! Summer is just around the corner!"

Written and reported by Lori Schuler ;)

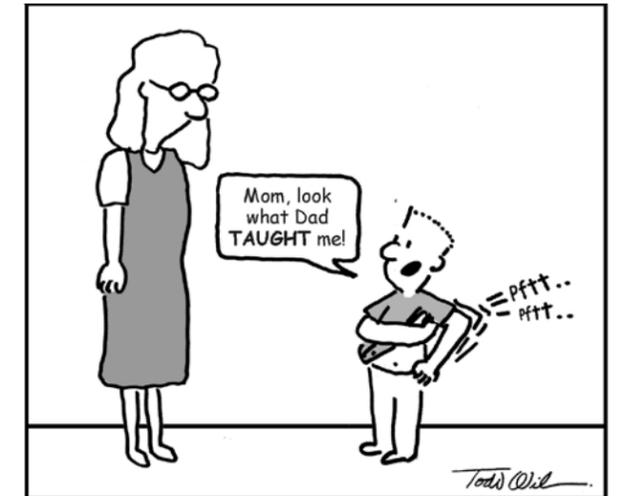
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HOME SCHOOL TIME OUT FOR LAUGHTER

FAMILY MAN | todd wilson



Deb had spent four of her best years teaching her children, only to be outdone by a body noise.

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