

## Starting Your Homeschool Journey

by Melissa Coombs

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### How to Find Out the Laws for Homeschooling in Your State:

One of the best resources is the Homeschool Legal Defense Association.

[www.hsllda.org/](http://www.hsllda.org/)

*Go to the homepage, and under the log in area find "In Your State" and click on it. Then click on the state you live in. On the right hand side of the page, you will see a link that says, "Laws: How to Legally Homeschool in Your State." It will take you to a PDF that will explain the options, laws and requirements for homeschooling in your state. Make sure you are legal!!*

### A Few Things You Should Know About Homeschooling

(Random Thoughts From Melissa)

1. Take a deep breath and relax! You can do this! There is no one more suited to teaching your children than YOU! Heavenly Father wants you to be successful, and with His help, you can and will do an amazing job homeschooling your children! Trust in yourself!

2. Homeschooling will change your family's life. Nothing you will ever do will have a more profound effect on your child and your family's future as homeschooling. You will develop closer bonds with your children, and they will have a friendship with each other that others will envy. You will have more time to play together, laugh together, learn together, read together, and experience life together. You are going to love it!

3. Do not worry too much about what others think about your decision to homeschool (including your mom, mother in law, friends, sister, visiting teacher, and your child's current school teacher.) You need to do what is best for your family and no

one knows that better than you and your spouse! Include Heavenly Father in this process and you will be amazed at the miracles, insights, inspirations, and growth that will happen in your family.

4. Before you start homeschooling, read a good book or two about how to homeschool! There are so many out there to choose from, and you need to pick one that fits with your style and personality. I skimmed through several until I found a few that seemed to fit me. They were full of wise tidbits that helped me get a mental picture of what homeschooling was like, and how I wanted it to be for my family. Attending a conference is also a must! :) The LDSEHE Home Education Conference is an amazing wealth of resources!

5. There will probably come a day when you are ready to throw in the towel on homeschooling and throw your kids on the school bus! This is normal. :) There will always be opposition in all things, there are always going to be rough days, and you will have times when you question yourself and the decision to homeschool your children. You will make it through these moments. PRAY, take a day off and just play together, remember why you decided to homeschool, refocus and start again.

6. Your house is going to get messier than usual, you will not have much personal time for yourself, and you will go crazy trying to figure out how to manage everything and keep it clean, straight and organized! It will take time, trial and error, but you'll figure it out...one day, one thing at a time. (Daily chores for the kids should be a part of their routine!)

7. One of the biggest mistakes new homeschooling moms make is creating a strict, tight schedule, with 8 hours of schoolwork planned in every day. This is not reality, and you are setting yourself and your children up for burn out and failure! Remember

that you do not have a kitchen staff, a janitorial crew, a yard maintenance team, guidance counselors and a secretary. It is wise to plan to accomplish your curriculum for the year by scheduling it 4 days a week. The 5<sup>th</sup> day can give you the flex you need for doctor and dentist appointments, house cleaning, lesson planning, field trips, special projects, etc. You'll thank me for this one!

that your family was blessed by homeschooling in ways that you did not comprehend at the time. The Lord will magnify your efforts, and you will not always see that in the day to day...but you will clearly recognize it one day.

8. You will at least once feed your family cold cereal for dinner, put your own self in a time out so you can have some personal time to calm down, cry when the school bus drives down your street, spend money on a curriculum that you end up not liking at all, wake up and tell the kids you are having a teacher work day and they can go play all day, have someone at WalMart ask why your children are not in school, and laugh hysterically when someone asks, "What about socialization?"

9. Please know: Your children will not be social misfits...they can still go to a prom...they will have friends...they will be able to be accepted into a college or university and be successful...you do not have to teach calculus, physics or constitutional studies if you don't want to – there's amazing curriculum out there that can do that for you, and online or community college classes ...some of your most memorable days will be the ones when you threw out the schedule and read a great book all day long together, or stopped everything to serve a friend in need. There is more to learning than what you can read in a book!

10. You will find yourself wondering if you can give (and teach) your children all that they need. You will wonder if what you are doing is enough. Please realize that you are not going to teach them every single thing they need to know in their life before they graduate from your homeschool! Believe it or not, they are actually going to continue to learn even after they turn 18! I can promise you that if you make a good plan and truly do your best (even if you fall a little short of your goal) that one day you will look back on these years and realize that it was even more than you imagined it could be and

## Homeschooling Philosophies and Methods

by Marsha LaFroth

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### Classical Method

This method is based on classical literature and teaching methods used throughout history. The classical education has 3 stages. These stages correspond to the development of a child's ability to reason. It is based on the Trivium. The first stage is the Grammar stage, elementary years. The purpose for this stage is to lay a foundation of knowledge and reading and writing skills that the child can build on in the next stages. The second stage is the Logic or Dialectic stage, middle school. This is where connections are made of the knowledge and facts already learned. It's where the child starts to question everything. In this stage the child is taught logic and debate. The third stage is the Rhetoric Stage, high school. The student will use the knowledge foundation from the grammar stage, the logic and debate skills from the Dialectic stage and use it to express themselves in speech and writing. Latin, the study of the Great Books, and classical literature are also emphasized.

#### Resources:

*The Well-Trained Mind: A Guide to Classical Education At Home*, Jessie Wise, Susan Wise Bauer. This book provides an overview of the classical method, as well as grade-by-grade-by subject curriculum recommendations.

*The Core: Teaching Your Child the Foundations of Classical Education*, Leigh A. Bortins. Leigh is the founder of Classical Conversations, a program that helps families teach their children the classical way. Families can attend the program weekly at one of the many campuses across the country. See the website below for more information.

[www.welltrainedmind.com](http://www.welltrainedmind.com)

[www.peacehillpress.com](http://www.peacehillpress.com)

[www.schoolofabraham.com](http://www.schoolofabraham.com) (LDS)

[www.accelerated-achievement.com](http://www.accelerated-achievement.com) (LDS)

<http://www.classicalconversations.com/>

[www.classical-homeschooling.org](http://www.classical-homeschooling.org)

### Charlotte Mason Method

Charlotte Mason was a 20<sup>th</sup> century British educator. She wrote extensively about education and taught governesses and parents how to educate in the home. She believed children were not just heads to be filled with knowledge, but individuals and capable of dealing with ideas and knowledge to have an active part of their own education. She advocated using "living books," books that brought the subject to life. Her methods encourage using the Bible for the knowledge of

God, short lessons, narration, the development of good habits, and the study of art, nature and poetry.

#### Resources:

*A Charlotte Mason Education: A Home Schooling How-To-Manual*, Catherine Levinson

*More Charlotte Mason Education*, Catherine Levinson. Both books give an overview of the Charlotte Mason method and a breakdown of methodology by subject. Some book recommendations are included. For a more thorough list of materials and a list of subjects by grade level, check *A Literary Education* by the same author.

[www.amblesideonline.org](http://www.amblesideonline.org)

[www.simplycharlottesmason.com](http://www.simplycharlottesmason.com)

### Thomas Jefferson Education Method

TJ Ed is based on methods by which great people throughout history were educated. It is based on the idea of a Leadership Education to "train thinkers, leaders, entrepreneurs, and statesmen--- those with understanding and competence to lead society (do things right) and the moral character to act with integrity in the areas they lead in (do the right thing)." TJ Ed stresses immersing students in the classics, encouraging interface with mentors, and developing leaders as opposed to an education meant to train the work force or professionals in our society.

#### Resources:

*A Thomas Jefferson Education: Teaching a Generation of Leaders for the Twenty-First Century*, Oliver DeMille.

Provides an overview of a Thomas Jefferson education, outlines developmental phases of learning, and discusses seven pillars for effective homeschooling.

*A Thomas Jefferson Education Home Companion*, Oliver DeMille, Rachel DeMille, Diann Jeppson.. A "how to" guide on implementing TJed.

*Leadership Education: The Phases of Learning*, Oliver and Rachel DeMille. Great information on understanding the different phases and knowing how best to guide your child in each phase.

[www.tjed.org](http://www.tjed.org)

## Traditional Method

The traditional method is when you follow the pattern of private or public schools by using similar workbooks, textbooks, and videos at home. The materials studied are usually similar to those in the traditional school system and can often be bought as a complete set per grade.

<http://www.liahona-homeschooling.com> –LDS  
[www.k12.com](http://www.k12.com)--non-religious  
[www.abeka.com](http://www.abeka.com)--Christian  
<http://www.mfwbooks.com>--Christian  
<http://www.tapestryofgrace.com>--Christian

## Unit Studies Method

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

### Resources:

[www.unitstudy.com](http://www.unitstudy.com) – Developed by Amanda Bennet. Several different topics to choose from.  
[www.konos.com](http://www.konos.com) – Several topical studies. Her unit studies tend to promote active involvement and creativity.  
[www.fiveinarow.com](http://www.fiveinarow.com) – Literature based unit studies.

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

## Unschooling Philosophy

This philosophy holds that children are always learning and a public school education dampens the desire. A basic idea is that when children are interested in a subject, they will immerse in it and learn. An educational philosophy where the child guides his own learning with oversight by the parent.

*Teach Your Own*, John Holt. He was an early pioneer in the homeschooling movement.

*The Relaxed Homeschool*, Mary Hood.

*The Unschooling Handbook: How to Use the Whole World As Your Child's Classroom*, Mary Griffith.

[www.holtgws.com](http://www.holtgws.com)

## Eclectic Home Schooling Method

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

## Which Philosophy Is Right For My Family?

Prepared by Dana Wood & Marsha LaFroth

Philosophy	Questions to ask yourself	Possible strengths	Possible Weaknesses
<b>Classical</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--Does my family like to read good literature?</li> <li>--Are my children intellectually oriented?</li> <li>--Am I comfortable learning alongside my child so I can teach things I never studied?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--Is tailored to the mental stages of children</li> <li>--Creates self-learners</li> <li>--Has produced great minds through the ages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--Requires scholarly teacher and student</li> <li>--May overemphasize ancient disciplines</li> <li>--May be demanding</li> </ul>
<b>Charlotte Mason</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--Does our family love to read both aloud and personally?</li> <li>--Will I follow through in teaching my children good habits and character traits?</li> <li>--Will I follow through with exposing my children firsthand to nature and great art?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--Treats children as active participants in the learning process</li> <li>--Exposes children to real objects and books</li> <li>--Eliminates meaningless tasks and busy work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--Tends to be very child-centered</li> <li>--Very little prepared curriculum</li> <li>--May neglect higher level studies because of emphasis on art, literature, and nature studies</li> </ul>
<b>Thomas Jefferson Education/ Leadership Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--Do I see greatness in my children?</li> <li>--Am I willing to break from the conventional way of educating?</li> <li>--Am I willing to focus on my own education so I can model being a good scholar for my children?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--Encourages a strong core of values and principles</li> <li>--Encourages a love of learning</li> <li>--Inspires the student to greatness and a life-mission</li> <li>--Encourages deep thinking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--Can be confusing on how to implement</li> <li>--Very few prepared materials</li> <li>--Downplays the value of a profession in favor of being an entrepreneur and/or statesman</li> </ul>
<b>Traditional Method</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--Did my child do well in a classroom?</li> <li>--Does my child read well and understand what he reads?</li> <li>--Am I the type to follow the lesson plans and pace the course?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--Everything laid out for easy use</li> <li>--Has definite milestones of achievement</li> <li>--Testing and grading is easy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--Is geared toward the generic child</li> <li>--Expensive to teach more than one child</li> <li>--High burn-out, difficult to keep up with</li> </ul>
<b>Unit Studies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--Am I a creative person?</li> <li>--Do I like trying to make everything interesting and fun?</li> <li>--Do I have the time to be the creative force behind the Units we study?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--All ages can learn together</li> <li>--Family interests can be pursued</li> <li>--Intense study of one topic is the natural way to learn</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--Hard to assess the level of learning occurring</li> <li>--Record keeping may be difficult</li> <li>--Too much activity-oriented learning may cause burnout</li> </ul>
<b>Unschooling</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--Am I comfortable with few preset goals?</li> <li>--Do my children have strong interests?</li> <li>--Does my family have a lot of natural curiosity and a love of learning?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--Takes little planning</li> <li>--Captures children's teachable moments</li> <li>--Provides discipleship model of learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--May neglect some subjects</li> <li>--May be overly optimistic about what children will accomplish on their own</li> <li>--Is extremely child-centered</li> </ul>