

# The Teaching HOME

## Questions & Answers Concerning Home Schooling

by Sue Welch and Cindy Short, editors  
The Teaching Home magazine

### **Q Why do families home school?**

**A** Many Christian parents are committed to educating their children at home because of their conviction that this is God's will for their family. They are concerned for the spiritual training and character development as well as the social and academic welfare of their children. Specific advantages have been expressed as follows:

Parents can present all academic subjects from a biblical perspective and include spiritual and character training.

Parents have quality time available to train and influence children in all areas.

Each child receives individual attention and has his unique needs met.

Parents can control destructive influences such as temptations, false teachings (including secular humanism, evolution, and immoral sexuality), occult influences, negative peer pressure, and unsafe environments.

Children respect their parents as teachers.

The family experiences unity, closeness, and mutual enjoyment of one another.

Children develop confidence and independent thinking away from the peer pressure to conform and in the security of their home.

Children have time to explore new interests and to think.

Communication between different age groups is enhanced.

Tutorial-style education helps each child achieve his full educational potential.

Flexible scheduling can accommodate parents' work and vacation times and allow time for chosen activities.

### **Q Are parents qualified to teach?**

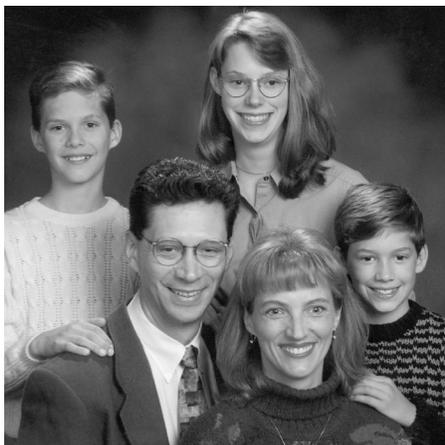
**A** You know your children better than anyone else and have the deepest love and concern for them.

You also have the most direct and long-term responsibility for your children before God, who commands parents to teach their children His Word, the most important thing they will learn (Deut. 6:6, 7).

Educationally, one-to-one tutoring has many advantages over a classroom where one teacher tries to meet the needs of many children at different learning levels.

You do not need to know everything in order to teach. Your example and enthusiasm in learning with your children will motivate and encourage them.

Dr. Brian Ray, president of the National Home Education Research Institute, conducted an analysis of standardized test results for 16,320 home-school children. He found these children to average at or above the 73rd percentile in all subject areas (i.e., in the top



27 percent of students tested nationwide). He demonstrated that there is little relationship between parents' education levels and children's scores. (For information on this report and how to contact NHERI, see p. 27.)

Resources are available to give home educators on-the-job training:

The organizations listed on p. 33 offer conventions, workshops, and newsletters. They can also refer you to a local support group in your area. See [www.TeachingHome.com](http://www.TeachingHome.com) for Web links.

Articles in current and back issues of *The Teaching Home* written by experienced home schoolers deal with the philosophy and methods of teaching all subjects to all ages.

God promises His wisdom and assures you that He will supply your needs as you follow His leading (James 1:5-7).

### **Q Is home schooling legal?**

**A** Each state sets its own laws governing home education. Complying with these laws may be as simple as informing the school district of your intent to home school and having your child tested or as complex as fulfilling requirements to be a private school. (See Summary, p. 29.)

Legislation is continually proposed. It is important to work with your state and local Christian home-school organizations to aid the passage of favorable bills.

Constitutional rights to liberty and privacy under the Fourteenth Amendment and the free exercise of religion under the First Amendment guarantee parents the right to educate their children according to their convictions. However, lower courts have ruled inconsistently in applying these rights.

We encourage you to comply with the law as far as your conscience will allow.

It is important to obtain a copy of your state's law pertaining to home education. You can avoid many problems by being accurately informed and by using tact and respect in dealing with government school authorities.

Home School Legal Defense Association

offers legal advice or defense. For information, an application form, or a free summary of your state's home-school law, contact HSLDA, Box 3000, Purcellville VA 20134, (540) 338-5600, [www.hslda.org](http://www.hslda.org).

### **Q How much time does it take?**

**A** Home schooling does require a time commitment. However, one-to-one tutoring is more efficient than classroom instruction and thus takes less time.

Time requirements vary according to the methods used, the ages of the children, and the number of children being taught.

Academic instruction might begin with one-half to one hour for the early grades and work up to a few hours of instruction and/or independent study for upper grades. Most correspondence courses state that their work can be completed in four or five hours per day.

### **Q Can I teach several children?**

**A** You can teach subjects such as Bible, science, history, and literature to several grade levels of children together.

Lessons can be presented in an amplified manner with explanations that enable all children to understand and assignments tailored to individuals.

Older students can do much of their work independently while younger ones receive necessary tutoring in basic skills.

### **Q What about socialization?**

**A** "Socialization" may be the most misunderstood aspect of home schooling.

Popular opinion assumes that children need interaction with a group of peers to acquire social skills. By contrast, many believe that extensive peer contact during childhood can cause undesirable peer dependency and negative behavior patterns.

"Do not be deceived: 'Bad company corrupts good morals'" (I Cor. 15:33).

Children are more likely to be influenced by the majority than to be an influence on them. Children who are educated outside the home are prone to accept their peers' and teachers' values over those of their parents.

Some advantages of freedom from peer pressure can be self-confidence, independent thinking, the ability to relate to people of all ages, and better family relations.

Godly principles of interaction can be taught, demonstrated, and reinforced at home by parents. Children can learn needed social skills by interacting with siblings or other children and adults under their parents' supervision. Young people who have had this type of training have adjusted well to adult life.

Your children will build lasting friendships with people of all ages as they interact with church and family friends. (Cont. on p. 38.)

## Q What about higher education?

**A** “Thousands of universities and colleges accept home schoolers. Many of these schools actively recruit home-educated graduates because of their maturity, independent thinking skills, creativity, and extensive academic preparation,” says Inge Cannon, executive director of Education PLUS.

In preparation for college entrance or vocational training programs, parents should prepare a transcript of high school work, award a diploma, and specify a high school graduation date. SAT or ACT scores are usually required for college admission.

A high school diploma may not be necessary for military enlistment, college enrollment, or employment when a student has 15 credit hours of college work completed.

Many colleges offer nontraditional programs for off-campus study.

Some home schoolers enter their chosen fields through apprenticeship programs supervised by parents and professionals.

## Q What about special interests?

**A** A wealth of experiences outside the home can supplement and enrich home education. Unlimited possibilities abound for field trips for individual families or groups.

Specialized classes are often available through parks, museums, art schools, or private teachers. Church and community teams offer various sports opportunities.

There may be more enrichment activities and time in which to do them available for home-taught students than for those in school.

## Q What materials are available?

**A** Fine Christian educational materials developed for Christian schools are available to home educators. New materials have also been developed or adapted especially for home teaching. These materials may be obtained in the following three basic ways:

You may order texts and teaching aids directly from the publishers or through mail-order companies. Each issue of *The Teaching Home* presents many suppliers of quality teaching materials. (See “Resource Directory,” p. 5, and at [www.TeachingHome.com](http://www.TeachingHome.com).)

An extension program offered through a local Christian school or church can provide teaching materials, testing, and counseling.

Materials, record keeping, and help can be obtained through correspondence courses.

Home educators can choose or combine elements of the following approaches.

**Traditional Textbooks.** High-quality textbooks are available from Christian publishers. These cover each subject in depth and in a logical order of topics.

**Worktexts** combine textbooks with exercises in consumable write-in books.

**Classical Approach.** Children progress from memorization of facts and development of learning skills to advanced logical reasoning and expressive use of language to discuss their knowledge and beliefs.

**Principle Approach.** Teachers and students keep subject notebooks that contain biblical perspectives and principles, personal applications, and information on the subject acquired from various sources.

**Unit Studies.** Theme-centered units integrate several subjects. Language arts and math need additional systematic teaching.

*You shall love the LORD your God  
with all your heart and with all your soul  
and with all your might.*

*And these words, which I am  
commanding you today shall be on  
your heart; and you shall teach them  
diligently to your sons and shall talk  
of them when you sit in your house, and  
when you walk by the way, and when you  
lie down, and when you rise up.*

*Deuteronomy 6:5-7*

**Books & Life Experiences.** Other than basic teaching in the three Rs, much learning comes through reading good literature and nonfiction. Everyday activities supplement study and give it perspective.

## Q What methods should I use?

**A** There is no one right method or curriculum. As an artist has an entire palette of colors to mix and use, so a home educator has a vast array of effective methods from which to choose. These choices may be based on:

Ages of the children.

Subject matter being taught.

Number of children you are teaching.

Your time for preparation and teaching.

Your children’s abilities or special needs.

Motivation that certain methods may provide to your individual children.

As you mix methods, your home school will become uniquely fitted to your family.

## Q Are there any difficulties?

**A** The following are common difficulties along with some suggested solutions.

**Lack of confidence.** With experience, you will gain the confidence you lacked at first.

**Fear of being unable to work with your own children.** Parents who do not have their children’s respect will have trouble getting their cooperation. Gaining their respect through proper relationships, discipline, training, and example should be the parents’ top priority. Home schooling can provide the incentive and environment to accomplish this.

**Inadequate time and energy.** Home teaching requires an investment of time and energy. Self-discipline and organization (a daily schedule, teaching plan, and chore list) will help ensure a well-run household. Children can be a great help when trained to work.

**Lack of commitment.** Families gain strength to overcome difficulties when they have the

conviction that home schooling is best for them and is God’s will for their family.

**Social pressure.** Make a well-informed decision and stand on your convictions. More information and a loving attitude often help friends and relatives understand and accept God’s leading for your family.

**Financial investment.** Costs of materials or programs vary considerably, but are much less than a private school. Many materials can be reused for siblings.

## Q Can I meet special needs?

**A** Many children with special needs are being successfully home educated. HSLDA membership is especially helpful to these families. The July/Aug. 1994 *Teaching Home* on “Special Needs” can be ordered on p. 31 or on our website.

## Q How do we get started?

**A** Here are some suggestions:

**Seek the Lord** and agree as husband and wife on your decision to home school. Pray for wisdom and strength. Make daily quiet times with the Lord a top priority.

**Research home education** by reading a basic book such as Christopher Klicka’s *Home Schooling: The Right Choice* (available from HSLDA, 540-338-5600, [www.hslda.org](http://www.hslda.org)) and back issues of *The Teaching Home*.

Meet and visit with experienced home schoolers in your church or local support group, and attend a home-school convention.

**Contact your state home-school organization** to learn of local support groups, events, publications, and your state’s laws governing home education (see p. 33).

**Make arrangements to comply with the law** according to your conscience and recommendations of state organizations and/or HSLDA. Consider joining HSLDA (see p. 30).

**Get your home and life in order.** Establish discipline and child training. Organize your family’s schedule and chore assignments to fit your educational activities. Get rid of unnecessary possessions to make way for learning materials and study space.

**Choose methods and teaching materials** that are appropriate for your children. If you are overwhelmed by choices, you can use a prepared curriculum from a textbook, work-text, or unit study publisher for your first year.

Re-evaluate and experiment with different materials and methods and make adjustments as you become more experienced.

Home schooling is a way of life in which the home is the center of life and learning. Parents can thus fulfill in a unique way their responsibility to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

*Reprints of this article may be made by downloading a file at [www.TeachingHome.com](http://www.TeachingHome.com) for personal use, home-school events or publications, or in starter packets. All reprints must be entire, unedited, and include “Used by permission. Copyright 2001 by The Teaching Home magazine, Box 20219, Portland OR 97294, [www.TeachingHome.com](http://www.TeachingHome.com).”*