

# **“Why Choose, or Continue the Homeschool Journey”**

Notes on Presentation Given at LDS-OHEA 2013

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## “Why Choose or Continue the Homeschool Journey”

Below you will find some of the main points I made and some of the questions I fielded during the Keynote presentation.

### You Prayerfully Decided!

The most important reason to homeschool is that you, as parents, searched it out, prayed and know you are doing what is best for your family. God knows each child and He knows the mission or purpose He planned for them. He can help parents in guide their children and help them to prepare for that life’s mission.

### You are a Pioneer

A pioneer is someone who leads the way. Many start out homeschooling from the beginning. Other pioneers may have started out in formal schooling, changed to homeschool, and began trail blazing to help others.

### You Are an Immigrant

Some homeschoolers are immigrants, migrating from public schools into homeschooling. I started out in the mid-1980s as a home school immigrant, as I migrated from institutional education to home education. I had a number of experiences in the public school arena that culminated with a principal suggesting I home school my oldest son. Then we moved and my younger son had surpassed what the school had to offer. He was ten, in junior high, and spent many days studying alone in the library. So, isolation was their solution? The schools were simply ill-equipped to teach to the educational needs of my three oldest children.

### Education can be Developmentally Appropriate

Much of the curriculum and expectations in our current public schools are not developmentally appropriate for many children. It is not surprising that many schools have about a 30% drop out rate. While most students stay in school, many shut down or burnout and settle for seat time.

Developmental readiness is not the same as IQ. It is interesting how some parents will brag about how their children know their colors, can count, or know their ABCs. Yet, the same children may not be ready to sit still, follow directions, stay on task, exhibit manners, and follow a teacher. Sure little children can learn to parrot ABCs, 123s, etc. But that is not what developmental readiness is about. I feel that this shift to plying preschool children with academic facts has come about due to the hype around elite preschools. Though preschools have been around for quite some time, it was not popular until about the 1990s. Also, in the past 10-15 years there has been a shift in many LDS wards of moms into the work force. In the 1990s about 75% of moms were stay-at-home moms. Now about 75% of moms work and preschool can become a convenience. Many have been convinced through marketing that academic preschool is what little children need most for success in school and life. I have known some women who

took on a job, just to be able to provide this coveted pre-school education for their children. In some major cities, many parents get their children on waiting lists to get into the best pre-schools before they are even born. They have been led to believe that if they get their child into the best pre-school, they will then get into the best private elementary and then secondary schools, and finally the best universities. These pre-schools have earned the name of “nursery universities.” Parents and many in society have been convinced by advertising and politicians that academics are what little children need and should be doing. The study most often quoted by politicians and the press was small in scale, offered to high risk disadvantaged children, expensive to operate, and developmentally appropriate--child interest led, not academic. On the other hand, the academic pre-school studies during the same period were also observing high risk disadvantaged children and in those studies any academic head start the children achieved usually leveled off by third grade.

In this century, major research institutions such as University of California Berkley and Stanford University have completed a large study of 14,000 children from advantaged homes. They discovered that the more hours and days in preschool, and the higher the family income of the children studied, the children showed more aggressive behavior and developmental delays. They compared them to children of similar advantage who were not in pre-school. The children with the highest benefit were the disadvantaged Hispanic children. A study by Harvard also showed children attending preschools often developed relationship attachment issues later on.

Even before the studies were conducted on children from advantaged homes, child psychologists began seeing a disturbing trend in their practices. They were seeing many burned out children who were being pushed at younger and younger ages to perform academically. Even gifted children need a childhood. See *The Hurried Child* by David Elkind. While early academic learning is popular among parents, publishers, test providers, and computer firms who sell to schools, there are many well informed voices for delayed academics. Some of those voices are Waldorf Education, Joy School (Linda & Richard Eyre), TJED (Rachel & Oliver DeMille), Charlotte Mason (Ambelside, Karen Andreola, and Susan Schaeffer Macaulay), Dorothy & Raymond Moore, as well as, us at Moor House Academy, and Royal Academe.

All children, no matter how smart they are need to develop their inner core. Children need a solid foundation in their early years to build their later academic learning upon. Young children need to be anchored in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to develop a solid relationship with God, family and as they grow, expand into the community. Part of their foundation needs to be learning good habits, developing Christian character, habitudes, and family work. These things are best developed through working together, playing together, serving together, and worshipping together. Without this as a foundation we risk raising clever devils. We have enough leaders without a moral compass!

### [In their Own Style, at their Own Pace](#)

In one room school houses, children were often allowed to study what they were interested in and move at their own pace. At the same time, most city schools were modeled on the factory,

where many of these students would eventually work. The factory school model was built on methods for easy delivery of information more than on how children learn and develop best. Also, schools were designed like factories for acclimating children to the factory way of doing things. This is an archaic system. We are long past the Industrial or Factory Age. Most of our children will not work in factories. The one room school house more closely resembles a home and the challenges mothers face. Most mothers that homeschool have the challenge of teaching several children of differing ages and stages of development. They do not have the time and bandwidth to prepare and teach two or more different full curriculums each day. In many ways, having many children is a benefit to each child, because younger children benefit from watching older children, and it puts more on the child to invest in their education.

## Homeschool can Offer Real Socialization

Age segregation in our public schools was designed for convenience of teachers. This isolation from diversity of ages is not what real life is. In real life, children grow up and will have to be able to work with people of a broad spectrum of ages, both in church callings, in the community, and in the workforce. Home school offers more social opportunity for diversity of peers. In a typical family there are a variety of ages. Home school families have the opportunity to be out in the community more, taking fieldtrips, going to the library, getting together with other home schooled families, and in many areas are able to participate in groups and classes with public and private school children, as well. This encourages a lot more social awareness than sitting at a desk and keeping quiet, as expected in many public, charter, and private school classrooms.

## Math in a Year (K-8) vs. Eight Years of Segmented Math

When you home educate your children, you can choose how math is learned. Basic math is a toolset and a language, and as such can be learned best in a contextual concrete way. In the mid-1800s, in many one-room school houses across America, math was learned in one school year when children were about 10-12 years old. Then the following year they either learned Euclidean Geometry or Surveying. The school year went from harvest to planting time with days off when winter snows made dirt roads impassable. So, children attended between 8-12 weeks. City factory like schools usually used graded textbooks and took many years to teach what country schools did in one year. Why? I believe that for country children, math was a living tool and language. They lived math. City children did not have the same opportunities or context and had to be taught in a way that gave them context, and also helped children build an understanding of the language of math.

This is an online copy of the math book my great uncle born in 1866 used. He lived in a small town in central Kentucky and attended the same one room school house my father later attended.

[http://books.google.com/books?id=dhHAAAIAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=dhHAAAIAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)

## Most Learning is Not Sequential

Think about it, most learning we do naturally is non-sequential in nature. Many things learned in school are set in an artificial scope and sequence. Does it matter whether we learn states in the order they came into the Union, alphabetically, or which you learn first, states or countries? Is it more important to learn basic multiplication or division first? When learning multiplication, why divide it out over a few years, why not learn it all at the same time? What should be learned first, time or weights? Can we spend a month on one thing the child is deeply interested in? Can we keep the lessons short to keep the interest of younger children? In homeschool, we are freer to learn based on interest and development rather than in a one size fits all, lock step, arbitrarily, sequential model.

## Common Core Standards

Some will home educate because they feel the Common Core Standards will not prepare their children for life, life's mission, or university level academics. Others want to get Common Core Standards aligned curriculum for fear their children won't be able to get into college. Get informed. Look beyond the hype and promises. As more parents and educators become informed, many are pressing to remove this from their state's schools. Others are lining up to promote it.

The Common Core State Standards site, it is a good idea to see firsthand what they claim:

<http://www.corestandards.org/>

This site examines Common Core Standards and it is a good idea to see firsthand what they claim: <http://whatiscommoncore.wordpress.com>

## Education for a Whole Life

Public, charter and private schools are designed to prepare children for a job or career only. Yet in the recent past, many people have not only changed jobs, but had to find an entirely different career, requiring reeducation. I feel that home education can build a lifestyle of continual self-educations and prepare youth for dynamic life changes due to the constantly changing economic landscape. The current public, charter, and private school curriculums are not designed to prepare a child for a whole life and active informed citizenship. Homeschool can teach life skills, citizenship, and family science in a way no school can. During the decades after World War II, many parents preparing their children for the future put all the eggs in the basket of career education. As the 20<sup>th</sup> century drew to its close, home economic classes and shop classes became more superficial. Most schools settled on teaching about the constitution but not teaching from original documents. Many young adults enter adult life with little to no understanding of the responsibilities of their citizenship. Most have little or no skills in caring for themselves, others, their finances, or their possessions. Home is the best place to learn and develop those skills. For many homeschoolers character, life habits, habitudes, and life skills are an important part of the curriculum for a whole life.

Many of today's parents were prepared for a career but not a whole life. They have learned and picked up needed skills in adult life. Many are still seeking to learn new things that can make their lives more rewarding and in many ways, easier. My thesis addressed this issue. Out of that thesis grew a website to help parents. My daughters and I created the Princess Academies in May 2009, which has grown over the past four years and is now the Royal Academe- Educating for a Whole Life- <http://royalacademe.com/>. We have created many resources for families; mother-daughter groups; and father-son groups.

In 2002, I created Moor House Academy, "Anchored in the Gospel and moored to the classics." I am now co-owner with my daughter. Moor House Academy offers a cyber/cottage school and educational resources for LDS families. <http://www.moorhouseacademy.org/>.

A few of the available resources from Moor House Academy are:

**The Power of an Hour (POAH)** – Curriculum guides and Enriching Traditions Book lists based on a four year cycle of history, anchoring studies to the four standard works, mooring studies to the classics, increasing breadth in core subjects and the arts.

<http://www.moorhouseacademy.org/page/1-The-Power-of-an-Hour.aspx>

Through Power of an Hour, what can a child be exposed to over a week's time, in an hour a day?

- \* Art (Artists, History, and Works)
- \* Music (Musicians, History, and Works)
- \* Language Arts (Spelling and Grammar Rules)
- \* Math/Science (Mathematicians/Scientists, History, Context, Concepts and Activities)
- \* Statesmen/ World Leaders/ Writers
- \* Political Geography (World and US)
- \* Introduced to Hebrew (or Beginning Greek, Latin, or a modern language)
- \* Poetry (Poets, History, and Poetry)
- \* Conference Spotlight
- \* Scripture Mastery
- \* Noble Person from Church History.

Through Power of an Hour what can a child be exposed to and explore over one school year of 36 weeks?

- \* 180+ scripture episodes
- \* 9 classic books of literature.
- \* 36 General Conference spotlights.
- \* 36 Noble men and women from church history.
- \* 25 Scripture mastery verses and 11 other scriptures.
- \* 9 artists and art appreciation of 36 works of art.
- \* 36 spelling rules.
- \* 9 Musicians and music appreciation 36 musical works.
- \* 36 Grammar rules.
- \* 18 Mathematicians and 18 living math activities.
- \* 18 Scientist and 18 living science activities.
- \* 36 Statesmen/ world leaders/writers.
- \* 36 Countries and an additional 14 week summer geography supplement, to round out 50 weeks.

- \* The Hebrew alphabet, numbers and words; or in years two through four- Greek alphabet and roots, Latin roots, or introduction to a modern language using the Melting Pot approach.
  - \* 9 poets and 36 poems.
  - \* 36 of the 50 states, plus a 14 week summer geography supplement to round out 50 weeks.
- Power of an Hour really adds up!

### Scholar Portfolios and Binders—

*The Aspiring Scholar Portfolio*, *The Book of Centuries* and *the Book of Nations* combined with the *Power of an Hour* are designed to help magnify the learning. These are pre-scholar tools that help the Aspiring scholar track their progress and organize their learning for easy retrieval. <http://store.moorhouseacademy.org/p/5/binders>

**Aspiring Scholar Portfolio (ASP)**—this is a portfolio of a child’s journey to scholar. It includes tracking lists of books read, field trips, and other things learned. This may also include narrations, summaries, essays, and reports.

**Book of Centuries (BOC)** is a timeline in a book, expanded with biographical information by the student. This is hands on and not mere rote memorization. The BOC is designed to be used in conjunction with the Power of an Hour. However, it can be used standing alone, or with any other curriculum that covers history, or the historical information about any subject.

**Book of Nations (BON)** is a student constructed gazetteer encyclopedia. As the child studies about a new country they build their own reference resource. Then in the context of studying classics, history, scriptures, and world events, they have a ready resource and the exposure that came in creating that resource.

**Family and Advanced Scholar Projects**—these projects can be worked on as individuals, families, and even as a class. <http://www.moorhouseacademy.org/page/2-Scholar-Projects.aspx>

**Principle Themed Bundles**— principle themed guided literature based unit studies with hands on activities.

### Thought to Ponder

I invite you to consider why you should home school, or why you should continue to do so.