

Shattering the Myths about Home Schooling

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I asked a dear friend of mine (not a home schooler) what some of her concerns were about the home education of children. She thought about it for a few moments, then told me:

A. "Home schooling is a full time job. Motherhood and keeping a home well is a full time job. How can any mother handle 2 full time jobs, and do them properly?"

She's right! I don't know any home schooling mother that has not felt overwhelmed at times with the sheer amount of work each day brings. Considering the fact that our purpose in life is to serve God, to present our bodies a living sacrifice, a lot of work is not a bad thing. After nineteen years of juggling the teaching of my children and the keeping of my home, I have found some things really help:

1. Remember who called you to home school. If you believe as I do, that the Lord Himself gave you the desire to raise and educate your children, then you know that He never gives us more than we can handle. He enables us to keep a home and teach the children. When things get a little overwhelming, seek the Lord in prayer.
2. Prioritise. You cannot attend every outing, read every book, and have a spotlessly clean house each and every day. Choose the best outings, the best books. Seek first the kingdom of God, making sure the Bible is honoured and taught above all else. Choose certain chores each day, and accomplish them, but you may have to ignore a few cobwebs or wash the floor once per week instead of every day.
3. Teach the children homemaking skills, and make sure they do them! By the time our children are twelve or thirteen years old, they can make a full meal for a family of thirteen. At age nine, they know how to efficiently change a poopy diaper. Even at five or six years old, they can make their bed, entertain a younger sibling, and take their own dishes to the dishwasher. Kids that rush out the door early in the morning miss out on learning all these skills!
4. Schedule. I will say more about this later in the article, but it is very important to make up a schedule and stick to it. We have a chore chart, a laundry chart, a cooking chart, and a daily schedule hanging on our fridge. I know whose turn it is to feed the horses and chickens by glancing at the chart. Each day we have an assistant cook, who gets breakfast while others do chores, and who helps with lunch and supper. This frees mom's time up as well as teaches the junior cook valuable skills.
5. Take the time to cuddle the kids! When you are very busy, however, don't feel guilty! Remember that the mother who sends her children on the school bus doesn't see them for seven or eight hours. You, home schooling mother, are there in the home the entire day. You have lots of time, no matter how busy you are, to stop and bandage the hurt knee, to settle the argument by teaching of God's love, and to love your children while teaching them during those teachable moments.

B. "Kids at home get no interaction with other kids. What about their socialisation?"

Actually, much of what is called "socialisation" is not what I want my kids to learn.

Our children interact with the members of their own family, but they certainly aren't limited to that. They participate in activities in the support group we belong to, in our church, and in the community. My married daughters have never felt at a disadvantage because they didn't go to school; in fact, they were more self-assured and prepared for life than most of their peers.

C. *"They miss out on the competition at school: quizzing, sports, etc."*

My children compete with each other, but I believe that competition can be highly overrated. Instead of competing with peers in order to do better than them and feel good about yourself, wouldn't it be wiser to teach the children to strive to do their best in all things to please their Creator? We teach the children that "it is a sin to do less than their best." -*Dr. Bob Jones*. We teach them to compare their lives with Christ, to evaluate themselves in the light of the Scriptures. We have a race to run, to be sure, but we have to make sure we're running the right race.

Hebrews 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

D. *"They don't have pressure to meet deadlines at home. They don't have to get up on time, catch a bus, get to a class at a certain time, and hand papers in by a certain date."*

They don't have the same pressures at home to meet deadlines! What a relief! One of the joys of home schooling is watching the school bus go by during miserable weather, thanking God that we didn't have to rush around, finding our homework and mitts and hats and boots, and lunches! However, my children do have to get up on time. They have chores to do before breakfast, or they don't get breakfast. They do have assignments, with completion dates. I am teaching them to use a planner, so they can learn to manage their time wisely. It is also true that if our family has been out late the night before we can modify our schedule and sleep in, but I consider that a perk of home education, and not a flaw.

Having said all that, I found a great resource on the net for Teaching Kids the Planner Habit. It is written by Cynthia Townley Ewer, Editor, Organized Home.com

Here's the link: <http://organizedhome.com>

Also, another site which has great ideas for organization and scheduling is <http://www.titus2.com>! It has a book called "Managers of their Homes". It is a great resource for learning to schedule and manage your time. Nobody needs to be as organised as a home schooling mother!

I want to encourage you, especially if you are a newcomer to the world of home schooling. My older daughters (ages twenty-three and twenty-six) both plan to home school their sons. They have nothing but good to say about their education at home. Even in the difficult times, when I was hospitalised because of problem pregnancies, my daughters tell me they just went on learning. The key is to give them a love for learning, and teach them to read well. They have never felt they missed out on anything valuable, and in post secondary education my second daughter felt that her home schooling was a real asset. The other students could not seem to think outside the particular class they were in, and Heather was the

only one in the class able to answer a question from information she had learned in a different class. Home education does not compartmentalise learning! It allows the student to be better rounded. A student who is taught at home is far less likely to have the attitude that "I have to complete this course, then I don't have to ever think about it again." Home schoolers are learning for life! Home schooling works!

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