

HOME
SCHOOLING

& for **FREE**
FRUGAL

SAVING MONEY FOR
THE HOMESCHOOL LIFE

JAMERRILL STEWART & FRIENDS

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Homeschooling for Free & Frugal

For the last 4-years our family has spent less than \$100 per year on homeschooling. We've learned how to stretch resources and pinch pennies without lacking a stimulating educational experience for our children. More than that, we've seen the Lord provide. We've had to trust him for what our children need. He has given us the tools that we've needed; empowering us to creatively compensate for what we haven't been able to run out and buy.

This book is for:

- New homeschool parents wondering how they can afford to homeschool.
- Moms stressing out over the cost of the curriculum that they love.
- Families looking to creatively cut financial corners without cutting educational quality.
- Parents on a zero budget who want to look at how frugal homeschoolers make it work.
- Homeschool moms looking for free & frugal supplements to their purchased curriculum.

This is a book about being confident in the choice to homeschool for free & frugal; you can still provide your child with a fabulous education without breaking the bank!

When my husband lost his job, I remember nearly shaking as I faced a new year of homeschool with a zero budget. Years later, since stepping into the Homeschooling for as free as possible mindset, that experience has blossomed opportunities that we would have otherwise missed. Homeschooling on the cheap has sparked ingenuity in our children as well.

There are over 10-contributors who share different perspectives within this book that will help in any free & frugal homeschool journey.

Thank you for taking the time to download your free copy of Homeschooling for FREE & Frugal. I pray that this book is a blessing to you; as you navigate through your homeschooling destiny.

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This book contains affiliate links.

How Our Family Began to Freely Educate

In 2004, our family of six was hit with a desperate need to be frugal, when Hurricane Ivan directly hit our Gulf Coast area. Our family endured losses during that time, of a job, things, and...peace. A few people helped with food (and the Tennessee power guys gave a bag of Snickers to the kids!), but the greatest help came in the area of education when someone reached out two hands full of generosity.

As soon as we were back on our feet, as a “pay-it-forward” thing, I started an online group where people could share their extra school supplies with those who needed them. The group grew and eventually became FreelyEducate.com. [At Freely Educate \(which is also FreelyHomeschool.com\)](http://FreelyEducate.com), I share high quality, 100% free educational finds, and I focus on the freedom we have to educate children in whatever way we believe is best for them.

Children are born with a love of learning; we only need to preserve it. Knowledge is freely available; we only need to find it.

Lori Seaborg is the owner of FreelyEducate.com. Some of the things that make her smile include journals, yellow walls, sunlight, foo-foo fancy coffee from the local coffee shop, her Nikon but also her iPhone, fabric, yarn, thread (okay, all textiles), a spontaneous family dance in the kitchen, a sketchpad & portable watercolor tray, kayaks, small picturesque towns, geeky techy stuff, Gulf Coast beaches, fellow missionary kids, chickens, unpredictable weather, and plenty of free time to follow her whims.

Four Frugal Ways to Teach Preschool

Preschool is a time for exploration and discovery. It is your child's first introduction to the world of education. The focus should be instilling a love for the process while encouraging creativity and critical thinking. Since this first step into education is also the first step into homeschooling it is new territory for both mom and child. The ticket on this voyage does not have to break the bank. You can successfully teach preschool for practically free with these tips.

Online Resources

You can find preschool lessons, coloring pages and activities for free from these sites:

- [Chubbie Cubbie's Preschool and Curriculum](#)
- [Apples 4 the Teacher](#)
- [Starfall](#)
- [Kinderprintables](#)
- [First-School Preschool Activities and Crafts](#)

For only \$20, you can join [Enchanted Learning](#) for one year. This is one of my favorite sites for fun printable activities. In the long run it is less expensive than buying several workbooks.

Frugal Field Trips: Preschoolers like to keep active. They learn best through play and exploration. Field trips are a great way to engage your child and spark curiosity about the world. A field trip does not have to be expensive to create a learning experience. Since children love to explore nature you discover a new world in your own backyard or by taking your child on walk through a park. A grocery

store provides a lesson in nutrition, colors, shapes, and math. Call a local bakery or chocolate shop and ask if you can get a behind the scenes tour. Try visiting your local police department or fire department for a fun field trip.

If you decide to go to the zoo or a museum for a field trip then cut down the cost by keeping an eye out for special offers on ticket sales. In addition, pack your own snacks and drinks. It will be healthier and much cheaper.

Frugal School Supplies: I can certainly recommend pricey school supplies. However, none of these things are necessary. Math manipulatives can come in the form of generic Fruit Loops, birthday candles, crayons, Legos, or army men. Take a stroll through your dollar store to find foam letter and number puzzles. Many dollar stores also carry educational supplies such as stickers, paper, art supplies, and even teacher supplies. Prepare in advance and buy supplies during school sales and keep an eye out on clearance items that are seasonal or themed. Craft stores often have clearance sales on seasonal items before the actual holiday or season. Think of ways to use seasonal or clearance items for your current purposes. Christmas glitter does not lose its shine in July. Buy in advance, right as the season is about to end, or after the season as opposed to in the moment for the best savings.

Library: The library often has preschool curriculum and activity books. Look to your library before buying. If you want to use books to reinforce lessons or you like a literature based approach then take the books out from the library before purchasing. Books are a large cost of homeschooling so the more books you do not have to pay for the more money you save. In addition, libraries often have programs for homeschoolers and preschoolers at no charge.

For more preschool helps check out these posts from Holy Spirit-led Homeschooling:

- [The Early Years of Homeschool](#)
- [Our Homeschool Life Schedule with Free Downloads](#)
- [What Does Read Aloud Time Look Like?](#)
- [Homeschooling a Two-Year-Old: Create a Sensory Station](#)
- [Simple Toddler Activity {Sorting}](#)

Richele McFarlin blogs at UnderTheGoldenAppleTree.com. She is a history loving, Eclectic, Charlotte Mason flavored, homeschooling mom to four beautiful children. She believes education should foster creativity, critical thinking, and curiosity. She believes parenting should foster a love for God, God's Word, service and family.

Our \$50-Dollar Homeschool Year

Our first few years of homeschooling I dropped several hundred dollars per year on curriculum that I really didn't like; all for one child. I wasn't sure what we needed, or just how to do this homeschooling thing. For many of us, this is a starting point. Oh, **but there is homeschool life beyond those cloudy beginnings.** We tend to find our pace and learn, mostly through good old trial and error, what works for our family. Some of us (raising my hand) tend to learn best in trials. I've had **several hot financial seasons in the fiery furnace while homeschooling; which have brought me to our free & frugal homeschool life.** Of course if I had to give our homeschooling style a name it would be Holy Spirit-led.

God made our children, and He preordained us to be their parents. Whatever our children need: the Lord will provide. Whatever their destinies: the Holy Spirit will guide them. **Jesus is the author and finisher of our homeschool.** He has to show up every day for this to work.

This [Holy Spirit-led Homeschooling](#) goes hand in hand with homeschooling for free & frugal. Faithschooling and freeschooling are a casting of my need to control and feel as though I'm living by my plan. I do my part in planning (with pencil) what our children need. I work my resources thoroughly. I focus on training our children in the way that they should go; **I trust the Lord for the rest.**

I know that can be easier said than done.

There are families who want to homeschool; However, finances are holding them back.

They feel the Lord telling them to trust Him, to take the leap, and homeschool by faith.

That's an uncertain place to be, in that faith place. **I remember the morning that my husband came home from work early. About 6-months prior to this he had lost his cushy government**

contract with Homeland Security. With that job we traveled the east coast for free as a family for a year, **living in Marriott Residence Inns (it was a blast!); during our full-time travel year the Lord confirmed that** I needed to [lay down my nursing career](#) and stay home full-time.

Where did I find myself after stepping out in faith and quitting my job? **I was standing in my kitchen with four small homeschooled faces looking at me and a husband who walked in the door 5-hours too early.**

My first thoughts - *I'd have to go back to work.*

I was determined that no matter what happened, be it my going back to work for a season, or the Lord quickly providing employment for my husband – no matter what we had to do, we would not give-up on our homeschool dreams.

There are many ways the [Lord provided when my husband lost his job](#). We had radical things happen like **opening a letter that contained several hundred-dollar bills**. Or, how we were **4-months behind in our house payment**, praying off foreclosure, and our tax return was (**now READ this**), our tax return was *to. the. penny.* what we owed the mortgage company.

That is the Lord's provision.

During this time I did return to work part-time on the weekends for 3- months. You have to know that **under normal circumstances this would have been agonizing for me**, and yes it was a fear I had at the beginning of this test. However, one day **I had complete peace** (*and I'm really big into following peace as my guide*) about calling a friend of mine who was HR manager for a local medical facility. **In that one call I had the part-time position that I needed.** This too was a miracle because in our area nurses were actually being laid off. During those weekends my husband watched the children, and during those weekends I had many patients and co- workers touched by the Jesus in me. **It was truly a time of seeing His handiwork amplified.**

For our homeschool that year we focused **heavily on reading great books**. We'd already discovered that reading together and a loud was one of our favorite family activities, but during the lay-off year we took it to a new level. The Lord also prepared me right before this **season of extreme frugal** by guiding me to read the [The Three R's by Dr. Ruth Beechick](#). This book **reinforced a gentle focus on math, reading and language**. With the **practical instructions laid out in The Three R's** I felt I could go a long way in teaching my children without a full curriculum.

Three cheers: Bible! Library! Internet!

I also found during that year that all I really needed is the Bible, and if at all possible the library and internet. **It was also during this year that we started lapbooking.** The first lapbook that we

ever created was the **17th Century Lapbook**, which I got for free when I signed up for [A Journey Through Learning's newsletter](#). (This offer is still valid too.) After we got our feet wet with the **17th Century Lapbook**, I found [Homeschool Share](#) and started setting our printer on fire while printing off their [free lapbooks](#) and [unit studies](#). I also started using the great sites like [Notebookingpages.com](#). And finally I took the jump and started designing our own lapbooks and unit studies, like our [Where the Red Fern Grows lapbook and unit](#). Here you can read more about how we [create literature lapbooks](#) in our homeschool.

Most importantly during our \$50 homeschool year **I learned that the Holy Spirit is directing my steps and the steps of my children.** All the things (and this lesson can go beyond homeschool “things”) that I thought we wanted and needed, we didn’t. The curriculum that I thought I couldn’t live without; we did just fine without it. **I had to trust the Lord to give us what He wanted us to have.**

We ended up with a school year that will surely go down in our family homeschool history as one of the best years of learning that we’ve ever had. It’s in these faith places where the Lord shows Himself strong.

A few honest tears here...

It really is the simple joys that matter.

Finding Cheap or Free Homeschool Curriculum

When I first started home schooling, or even when I started thinking about home schooling, **I was under the assumption that I would have to buy a homeschooling kit from homeschool curriculum sellers;** you know what I'm talking about right? Those \$1K kits that come with all that you need to teach your child one year of school. **Not that there is anything wrong with these kits.** I know families that successfully use them. **It's just that I have observed a lot of people who believe you cannot home school your child without a box kit.** My neighbors and some family still believe this. *The school that I pulled my children out of asked me, "What manufacturer I was getting my curriculum from?"* I laughed to myself when I made a list of all the books and curriculum we were using, and tried to read it to the administrator over the phone {side note: I didn't have to do this in my state, but I just wanted to inform her that I didn't have to do it the way that she thought that I should}.

Our curriculum choices were just that, our choice.

One of the first things that I did was to search the web for printable sheets that I could use to keep a list of subjects that I needed to teach. And I wanted to write down all the great choices, that I was reading about {bloggers share a lot of great information... but if you're reading this I'm sure you already know}. **Then, I started searching what other homeschoolers were using in their home school.** Most bloggers keep a list somewhere on their blog of the curriculum that they chose. I nosed through a lot of blogs... **especially those bloggers that had kids the same ages or in the grades as mine.** After taking notes, researching on sites like [Cathy Duffy Reviews](#), [HSAAdvisor](#), and [Home-School Reviews](#), I started purchasing curriculum that I wanted to try, in the cheapest way possible. [Homeschooling on a budget](#)... it can be done!

Two things I learned really quickly once I began to homeschool:

1.) I **didn't need to buy any curriculum** at all to successfully home school my children

and

2.) **what works for one family may not work for another.**

I think number 2 is probably obvious, as all families and children are different. **Just like parenting, home education is a figure-it-out-as-you-go kind of thing.** But if number 1 is a shocker... let me explain. Thanks

to the Internet, you can find a lot of what you need online, with just a little time spent searching.

You can make your own math program... **probably all the way up to high school.** There are a lot of free websites that allow you to make your own math worksheets and there are sites that offer ready-made ones, as well. Have your children help you cook or bake in the kitchen, divide the recipes in half and you have a lesson on fractions and conversions. **When teaching children about stewardship, especially with their own money... have them tithe 10% or figure out sales tax and you have their lesson on percentages. I believe every day math is the most important lessons.**

For **Science and History**, you can do [unit studies](#) and/or read living books. History and Science comes alive with hands-on experiments and living books, field trips to museums, zoos, and any places with real history help to teach kids without textbooks or a set curriculum.

Study and learn the Bible, together. **All you have to do is read it and discuss it. Then memorize it together. This helps when trouble arises; they have the verses on their hearts - couldn't get any simpler or cheaper than that. The Bible has history also. After the Pentateuch {the first 5 books of the Bible} is the "History books." We are working through those now in our home school. What a wealth of information there.**

Finally, you have Language Arts. **This is the easiest and the cheapest of all the subjects.** Just talk to your children. Yep, that's it. Kids hear what you're saying to them... and in front of them... and they are learning proper language etiquette. **If you talk to them in big words they will learn to talk in big words and in turn one day learn to write just as eloquently.** When I say a new word to my children they always ask, "What does that mean?" So, then of course I share with them the meaning. Then, I use the word again, and again until I hear them using the word. You could make a game if this, if you'd like, with a dictionary. Use an [online dictionary](#), if you don't own one. Lucky for us, my oldest daughter was in the county spelling bee several years in a row. Since she spelled a word

correctly, she received a very nice hard cover dictionary {actually a couple of them}. It gets a lot of use in our house. Learn new words... more than 5 letters... what fun!

Then get your kids outdoors because the world can be your classroom. Let them keep journals; nature journals and writing journals. This is a great way for them to remember all that they've been seeing and learning... especially in nature. Find a bug and research what it is online. **Explore the woods and climb trees**, or even dissect a worm from your garden. **Take your kids fishing.** Or just [watch some eagles online](#) {we have watched this same nest online for the last year. We watched babies grow last spring and now there are new eggs.}

Lastly, every Friday, I (along with another blogger) post "[Homeschool FreeBEEs](#)" on our blogs. Also, we have a [Homeschool FreeBEE Co-Op](#) on Pinterest. **What a great place to find pretty much anything you need to fill your home with "curriculum" without spending a single cent.** Are you on Pinterest, yet? If not, you should be... lots of great homeschool ideas and fun on Pinterest.

I think the most important thing to remember is that you have to find the best mix of curriculum and use of the world that works best for you and your kids... and for your budget. **There is no set formula for success and no amount of money can insure the best education for your child.** Just teach your children the joy of learning. Make it fun!

Jen Grice is the owner of GricefullyHomeschooling.com. She teaches with a Biblical Homeschool Philosophy. This means that teaching her kids all about God, His word, His world, and His History is her main goal. Anything after that is icing on the cake.

How to Create Homeschool Printables

The internet offers an abundance of free printables perfect for homeschooling, but sometimes I just cannot find what I want. So, when I get an idea in my head and I cannot find it online, I create [my own printables](#). If you are sitting there and thinking, “I could never do that. Just looks too hard. Too time-consuming...” let me give you some tips that will help put your anxiety to rest.

Software for Making Printables

If you are wondering if you need special software to create printables, the answer is “no.” You can use almost any document software to create printables as long as it allows page formatting and supports the use of clip art.

I use [Microsoft Word](#) to make my printables. Honestly, I would prefer [Microsoft Publisher](#) but I am too frugal to hand over the money for an additional program that will just bog down my computer’s speed. Other bloggers like to use [OpenOffice](#) which is a free productivity website.

Choosing Clip Art for Printables

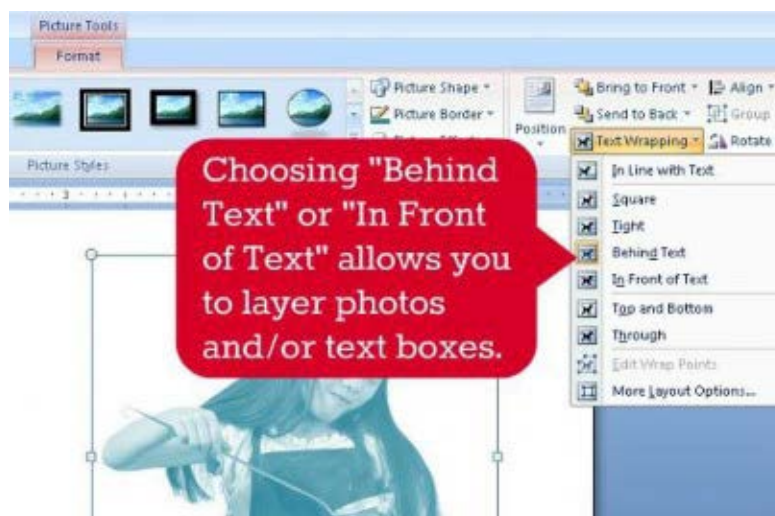
If you are using your printables at home and will not be distributing them past your front door, images are easy to find. However, if you plan to post your printables on a blog or use them in your co-op, please make sure that they are royalty-free or public domain. You do not want to be stepping on anyone’s copyright. And, be kind... disclose where you got your images so the artist gets the credit they deserve.

Personally, I use the images within Microsoft Word or from [their online library](#). If I cannot find what I want there, one of my favorite hang-outs is at [MyCuteGraphics.com](#). I used her cute clip art almost exclusively for my [Multiplication Printables with Visual Cues](#).



Page Formatting Your Printables

When I am creating a printable document, I set the margins to zero all the way around the page and do not use a header or footer. I want the entire page to be my canvas. However, you have to keep in mind that printers have their own set of margins and each printer can be different. So as you lay out your worksheet, keep in mind that images which go to the edge may be cut.



If you are going to be creating multiple printables of a similar style, save yourself some time and create a template. Once you set up your text boxes and place your images, save the file. Then, each time you use this template to build a slightly different variation, you can click to “save as...” and give it a new file name, keeping your template intact.

Now, sometimes, your images or text boxes will try to jump around on the page. Here is a tip: Set the text wrapping on all text boxes and clip art to “square.” Then, you can drag them all over the page. If you need to overlap your images, choose either “behind text” or “in front of text.” Then, you can use the “send to back” or “bring to front” options to layer them in the order you prefer.

Practice Makes Perfect

The more time you spend with your software, the easier making your own printables will become, but if you feel your anxiety level rising, walk away. Check your library for a manual on your software, look online for tutorials (at a website like YouTube where you can see what they are doing), or take a community class that focuses on how to use your particular software.

As you grow in confidence, you will find that creating your own homeschool printables becomes easier and easier. Then, you will have exactly what you need, when you need it, and the only cost is your time.

Tabitha Philen is the owner of MeetPenny.com. She blends homeschooling and frugal living together under that blogging roof. She is blessed to reside in Mobile, Alabama with her husband and our four children (ages ten years old and under). Previously serving as a freelance writer, she has written articles for ParentLife Magazine, Bay Area Christian Family Magazine, Essential Woman Magazine, and Home Educating Family.

Don't Let Fear or Money Steal the Joy of Your Homeschool

I will admit it; **I walked away from homeschooling before I even began**...because of the cost of curriculum. When our oldest was 2, we decided...there would be no yellow bus...and I began researching curriculum. I had this idea that I could find something FREE that met the needs of our home.

I searched high and low...and could not find what I was looking for.....and walked away.

There were a few other reasons we chose not to homeschool....at least there were reasons I told other people....the truth: **fear and money!**

You see....I was afraid I could not teach my children. I had been told that parents are not smart enough, that they (we) are not educated in a manner that allows us to teach our children. AND I bought that LIE!

And...I paid no attention to God's word:

“Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them” (Deut. 4:9).

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up...” (Deut 6:5-7).

Worse yet...**I was already afraid of failing as a parent.** I mean, what if my children decide to do something really horrible, that means I've failed as a parent... If you add their education to that... that means...I could be considered a failure if they do not graduate with honors and end up in an Ivy League college – to go on to be millionaires, right? ARE YOU WITH ME?

Add money to that...REALLY? I already pay taxes...so, I might as well send my kids to school... because that is what a majority of our property taxes are used for...and God wants me to be a good steward with my money...so, I should send them to school...because then, because then, because then...

So...why should I spend money on curriculum...I'm already paying for it! Shouldn't someone give it to me for free?

And then...then...God did what he always does. He took my never, my fear, my excuses...and he closed doors...one at a time...and made me sit at his feet....

And he gently, lovingly showed me...**I could homeschool.**

It is his desire for me to teach, love and raise up these blessings....**these miracles....and NOW**

Now, I budget. And am very frugal about what I use for homeschool...

So, I'm going to give you a quick little list for **How to Save Money and Homeschool...** for cheap and possibly FREE.

BORROW – seriously, borrow books from friends. I have met several Moms who use the classical methodology for teaching and they purchase curriculum they can return to later. So, I borrow their books from them during their 'off' years.

- From friends
- Bless others by loaning books to them!
- And, use these forms...or something you like better to keep track
- [Books Borrowed](#)
- [List of Books Loaned to Friends](#)

Use your library – **This can be tricky. Most homeschool Moms I know...LOVE books (I'm raising my hand...and saying amen – are you joining me...or leaving me here with my hand up all alone?) Seriously....check out all the books your library has to offer. Now, I'll be honest...I'm pretty picky. There are some subjects that I do not use the library for. Why? OK...**

here's the deal. Evolution. It seems to be the end all of almost any secular book or movie I pick up. It is a theory....and is not Biblical. I love the Bible, God's word and the beginning of God's word to me...is very important. I don't think he started His book, His words.... carelessly...and I do not think they should be considered trivial. NOW, that being said, that does NOT mean I do not teach my children about evolution. They know what it is. They also understand Natural Selection. So....back to the library. I cannot think of many science books (including the cute little ones about animals) that do not, in some form/fashion bring up evolution. So...while I teach my children about it... I do not bring home a ton of books telling about it. BUT, USE your library!

And...I know you're going to need a list to keep track of that big pile of books you gather while you're there...I've got you covered with a simple list for that, too.

[Library Book List](#)

Read other homeschool blogs. **Not just ones that cater to only your beliefs or ways of teaching....but ones that can help you grow and provide you with good resources**

Here are a few of my favorite resources

- Bible (my little guy...just lights UP when he finds a word (or words) he can read in the Bible... it's just more special for him!)
- [Ambelside](#)
- [Charlotte Mason](#)
- Create your own Worksheets (etc) using (I am currently using Open office, but will be switching soon)
- [Notebooking Fairy or Jimmie's](#) Collage
- [Notebookingpages](#)
- [Homeschool Share](#)
- [Gricefully Homeschooling](#) and [Kathy's Cluttered Mind](#) (offers tons of freebie resources on Fridays)
- [Mom's Mustard Seeds](#) (that's me) – I have free History Lessons on Fridays
- [Daze OF Adventure](#) – often has great resources for fun activities...like this one for a Skate
- [Look What We did](#) – great site for various -HOW TO's by Homeschool Moms
- And of course...here at Holy Spirit-led Homeschooling {Check out [Freebies & Printables](#)}

And more..there are so many amazing Moms sharing what they make -

The point is...**You do NOT have to spend a fortune on curriculum, classes, field trips.... Use what God has given you. Do not let fear or money stand in your way...**the way it did mine!

Rebecca Bryant is an author and speaker at MomsMustardSeeds.com. Her heart's desire is to share the truth about God's glory with you and encourage you to be the woman/wife/mother that God created you to be.

Homeschooling on the Homestead for Free & Cheap

In my many years of homeschooling, **I've probably spent less than \$1,000. I'm not counting things like crayons, glue, paper, or even field trips; because those are all things I would spend money on anyway. But for specific school curriculum, I've spent less in 18 years than we spent on one year of my oldest son's private school tuition. For a one-income family with six children, that is a significant savings.**

I've always said that **all you need to homeschool is a Bible and a library card.** In the early days, those things, and a few manipulatives, are all I used. The manipulatives were an investment that I do not regret. I also invested in a good math curriculum with teaching CD's (beginning with 5th grade). For the most part, however, we have learned everything we need to know simply by living our lives. And with that, I've found that I rarely need to purchase anything more than what I would already purchase to complete our homesteading projects.

A current example is beekeeping. **I'm taking an 8 week course in beekeeping taught by a master beekeeper.** This course could be college-level. The instructor told us to bring our children, ages 11 and up, and I have. He has learned more science from this class than anything I would teach him. The instructor treats him like an adult class member— answering his questions, and expecting answers from him when she quizzes us. I'm paying for the class and purchasing hives and bees because we want to add this dimension to our homestead. **My kids are along for the ride— and learning at the same time.**

The same happens in the garden. From the time they quit pulling up the plants, my kids are with me in the garden. Before that, they are in the playpen next to me. **They learn the difference between the garden plants and the weeds, the beneficial properties of the weeds, the composition of**

soil, how to test the soil for pH and minerals, how to measure the rows, how to divide the length of the garden by the width of the rows to determine how many rows we will have—all this and more. What do we do in the garden while we plant, weed, and pick? We tell stories, we recite memory work, we do mental math and review math drills, and we sing. In fact, in two hours of gardening we can cover many of the subjects for the day.

I have a burden for parents who feel the call to learn more practical life skills, live a more sustainable lifestyle, or even try to live off the land; but they cannot get past the load of schoolwork to get outside and live their dream. **I grieve for those that have tried homesteading and homeschooling and give up in despair.** The amount of work that homesteading requires keeps them from their textbooks and seatwork so they either move back to the pavement, or put their kids in school. That is why I'm developing the [Lessons from the Homestead](#) series. I began last year with a simple e-booklet called [Lessons from the Seed Catalog](#). In this booklet you get over **50 lessons in math, language, science, art, and more—all found in a seed catalog.** I just released [Lessons from the Hen House](#)—same type of lessons except they are taken from your backyard flock. **Lessons from the Tree House, Bee Hive, Dairy Barn, etc. are to come out some time this summer.**

I don't expect these booklets to be an all-encompassing curriculum; rather a tool to help parents implement the same style of teaching. **Even if you do not live on a farm, you can still use practical life to teach your children.** The kitchen is the perfect laboratory for math and science. Kids can learn even more math skills with sewing. **My oldest son learned a great deal of science and history when he apprenticed to a blacksmith.** My second son learned math, science, and more from apprenticing with a cabinet maker. The possibilities are endless.

Take a look at what you do every day. Ask yourself, **“What can my children learn from this?”** Then do it—with your children by your side. Just as the scripture says, *“And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: 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.”* (Deut. 6:6-7) Although these verses speak of spiritual truths, we can also apply this method to our academics.

Give it a try. I'm sure you will find a **wealth of free or cheap educational opportunities** all around you.

Carol J. Alexander's site, [Lessons from the Homestead](#), is a multifaceted service offering encouragement, learning ideas and projects, profiles of families that successfully homeschool on the homestead, and more. The highlight of this is a series of e-books that each contains 50+ lessons to supplement your curriculum. Currently you can get the two-book [Gardening Set](#) for the price of one by using the discount code 'spring.' Visit [LessonsFromTheHomestead.com](#) to learn more.

Frugal Homeschooling: A Lifestyle of God's Best

Pssst...**I want to let you in on a BIG secret:** There is no reason to spend a lot of money in order to provide a top notch education for your children. When Jamerrill asked me to write a post for Homeschooling For Free & Frugal; it got me excited to share what our family has done over the past 8 years of homeschooling in order to keep our homeschooling costs to an absolute minimum. **It is my hope to give insight and encouragement to those: looking into homeschooling and are overwhelmed by the price tag of new curriculum, current homeschooling families who are looking to cut down their costs, families with multiple children, and anyone who is looking to change their entire life by living frugally in every area possible.**

First I want to start off by saying that I believe wholeheartedly that leading a debt-free way of life is essential to having God's best for your family. **It is my hope that each and every one of you out there reading this series, if you are not already debt free, are working on a plan to become debt free. I am in no way saying that if you have debt you cannot have God's best, but I am saying that His best cannot be fully manifested in your life until you are. My husband and I learned many hard lessons in this area of life and currently have one debt to our name, a rental house in North Carolina, where we plan to live when we depart from the Army in a couple of years. And for this home, we are on a plan to pay it off very early, and working hard to achieve this.**

There are many ways that your family can homeschool for free or nearly free. **I am going to show you some of the ways we've been able to provide a top-notch education for our children at a bargain basement price! First I will share some of the top ways our family receives FREE homeschool curriculum:**

Utilizing websites that offer **FREE** curriculum, **FREE** lapbooks, **FREE** printable worksheets, **FREE** Kindle/ebooks, **FREE** educational apps, and much more. You can find some great **FREE** resources like these on my blogs [Homeschool Freebies page](#).

Entering blog giveaways. **No kidding. I have won hundreds of dollars of FREE curriculum by simply taking less than a minute to enter blog giveaway contests offered by other bloggers. In addition to offering lots of [giveaways](#) on my own blog, I host a [Friday](#)**

[{Giveaway} Day](#) where you can always come to enter to win **FREE** homeschool/family friendly items and it costs you nothing!

Signing up for email updates from freebie sites is essential. **The bottom line is, this will save you time, and make sure you get the widest variety of FREE things out there. If you are unsure where to start, do a Google search and you will be surprised how many people bless us with FREEBIE information!**

Library, library, library! **Local libraries provide a wealth of FREE resources for your homeschool. In addition to books, every library we've lived near has had complete preschool and Kindergarten curriculum, language sets (ie: Rosetta Stone), art classes, and even science classes. Check your local library for the details of what they offer, you don't know if you don't ask!**

In addition to **FREE** homeschool curriculum we have also come up with a few simple ways to earn free money that cover curriculum costs and more. **By using the ideas below, you can save the difference and virtually have "free" money for curriculum, zoo memberships, supplies, or anything else needed for your homeschool.**

One way that is sure to help line your pockets with extra cash is to use coupons for everyday items whenever possible. **We eat a diet of mostly whole organic foods but are still able to stock up on toiletries and other items with our usage of coupons. While couponing is a new trend surfacing these days as a by-product of our countries economical hard times, it is not at all new to me. I grew up couponing with both of my great grandmothers and one of my grandmothers. So the art of couponing has been ingrained in me over the past 36 years of my life. While this may not seem like it has anything to do with homeschooling: *it does*. By saving money on the things we buy every day, we are freeing up money to buy other things – like curriculum – for our family. And more importantly we are teaching our children to be wise with their finances which teaches them patience and a bit of math and economics.**

Buying clothing and other essentials online saves you a ton of money you can put back into your curriculum. **This way of**

shopping is cheaper for the consumer as it is shipped directly from the warehouse to your door. I save hundreds of dollars when it comes time to buy clothing for our family. **The way to do this is simple:** Only buy items that are on sale, have free shipping, AND you have a coupon code to use (if you don't have a coupon try www.retailmenot.com or do a Google search to find one).

Sign up for Ebates to earn cash back on virtually EVERY purchase you make online. In the 4 years since we initially signed up for Ebates, we have received \$681.95 cash back on our purchases. This is simply from linking through their site to purchase items I was going to buy regardless if I got cash back or not. Too easy to pass up. You can sign up for Ebates [HERE](#) (this is a referral link).

Buying USED curriculum. This has been a huge blessing to our family. We have done this through local homeschool group curriculum sales, used book stores, homeschool consignment stores, [Ebay](#), Yahoo Groups, and [Vegsource](#). **We have been able to purchase almost all of the curriculum we use for at least 60-75% off of retail** and sometimes an even deeper discount. You have to be very patient in this process as these deals are not always easy to come by. I suggest having a running list of what you will need for the next year and even several years down the road so if you see a crazy good deal – you can snag it! Last year I bought the current Deluxe Edition of My Father's World (ECC) for 85% off of retail. Now that was worth waiting for!

Rule of thumb: **IF IT'S NOT ON SALE, DON'T BUY IT!** This way of thinking requires patience and self-control on your part, but becomes a life changing habit after a little while of making these decisions.

I know that those of us who value being good stewards of the resources God gives us are always looking for new ways to be wise with our finances. **I pray that this article gives a little more insight to someone out there looking to “tighten” up their budget and find some ways to honor God through their finances. While this is not a comprehensive list of all the things we do to save money, it is a good start to a beautiful lifestyle of living frugally but still being blessed with God's VERY BEST for your family! Here's to saving!**

Carlie Kercheval is a happily married work-at-home homeschooling mom. She and her college sweetheart have been blessed with 3 precious children to raise while traveling the world as a military family. Carlie is the founder of [Today's Frugal Mom™](#) and [Managing Your Blessings](#). She and her husband co-author the [Learning to Speak Life™](#) family Bible Studies and co-host the [Learning to Speak Life™ Radio Show](#). When she is not busy enjoying her family and the great outdoors, you can typically find her cozied up somewhere under a blanket with a good book. You can connect with her on [Facebook](#), [Pinterest](#), and [Twitter](#).

Tips for Planning Your Free & Frugal Homeschool Year

I've been touched by the emails that I've **mom**s who almost weren't going to homeschool because they thought they couldn't afford it. Several moms have said that it has been helpful to **SEE how it can be done** and hear from a variety of authors during [10 Days of Homeschooling for Free & Frugal](#). This is my heart, exactly, to show moms who need encouragement that homeschooling is so much more than curriculum in a box and a scope and sequence, and it can be done on a small or dwindling budget.

Before you start planning next homeschool year, remember;

- No matter your needs,
- Income,
- Debt,
- Outside pressure, What you spend on books,
- Field trips,
- Art lessons, **Football shoes**, Or lack thereof,
- Homeschooling is worth the cost.

With that being said **I'm going to share a few tips on how to plan a free & frugal homeschool year.**

Choose your general schedule. **Decide how you're going to schedule your year.** Some families follow the public school calendar, others do school year round. I know moms who do 8-weeks of school and take every 9th week off. Others do 10-weeks on with 2-weeks off. We've done a variety of schedules depending on our family dynamics at the time.

Don't Stress. **It may seem overwhelming at times to not have a full planned out curriculum in front of you.** Break whatever schedule you choose into manageable pieces. *I'm a big fan of slow and steady wins the race.*

Keep your plan as simple as possible. Let natural curiosity and Holy Spirit-led opportunities fill in the gaps. **The topics that you don't plan to cover, and the questions that you didn't expect to be asked, equal learning rabbit trails of educational goodness.**

Cover your basics. **Even nine years into homeschooling I still stick to [Ruth Bee Chick's 3 Rs method](#).** Reading, writing, and math are what I plan out first. During our first year of homeschooling for free & frugal, I planned out our boys math using free online printables. **I printed out 2 weeks' worth at a time and filled their notebooks.** [Math- Drills](#), [HomeschoolMath](#), and [TLSBooks](#) (& many more) are a wealth of resources for homeschool math.

To theme or not to theme? **I like to pick an overall theme for our homeschool year, or possibly change it by quarters.** This year our theme has been the Civil War. **You could pick a focused theme for your year based on your children's interest.** Picking a theme helps me gather resources. **I've been picking up books on the Civil War for our home library for several years now.** I knew we'd eventually get to it, and when we did this stack of books in the picture below is a small sampling from our large collection.

Consider a homeschool co-op or group: **My group is not only great for local support and community, but again the freebies;** moms bring boxes of curriculum to meetings to giveaway and bless. **The other homeschool moms dig through the boxes like they're treasure.** Well, free books are homeschool mom treasure!

Taking advantage of free events: **We live in an area that is both rural and close to many historic locations.** Spending a day taking in the sites in Washington DC is just a tank of gas and a picnic basket lunch away. I often check with my state homeschool group (Home Educators Association of Virginia) for free and discounted homeschool events around our state.

Trusting the Sovereignty of God for Frugal Homeschooling

Is God in control of everything? I know you're thinking, "Yes, God is omnipotent." But do you *really* believe that God is totally sovereign over *every* detail of your life? Is He sovereign over your homeschool and the materials you have to teach your children? Of course, the *right* answer is *yes*, but sometimes our actions prove that our faith is lacking.

For example, evaluate your contentment. Are you content with what you have to teach your children? Do homeschool catalogs send you into a depression of self-pity as you see all the great books and DVDs that you just can't afford? Are homeschool conventions a major exercise in temptation as you pine for expensive all-in-one programs that are financially out of your reach?

Do you ever use your lack of financial resources as an excuse for your homeschool?

- If only I had more money, my children would have fewer gaps in their education.
- If only I had a more expensive curriculum, my child wouldn't struggle with math facts.
- If only I could buy new instead of using hand-me-downs, my children would have a greater passion for learning.

The reality is that every child has gaps, most children struggle with some element of math, and all kids have days they don't want to do homeschool.

God has placed you in the exact situation that you are in. If you are forced to be a frugal homeschooler because money is tight, He is putting you in a perfect place to learn to trust His provision.

Over the years, I have learned that trusting the sovereignty of God makes me a far more frugal homeschooler. That assurance expresses itself in three main ways.

Shop your shelves instead of catalogs

Although there are plenty of bookmarked pages in my stack of homeschool catalogs, I know that I have plenty on my shelves already. Some materials I bought with great intentions still haven't been used. I have random books bought at library sales or thrift stores that we've never read. I have board games and card games that we rarely play.

The reality is that I am blessed beyond measure with abundant homeschool curriculum if only I will open my eyes to see it. **So when I start feeling sorry for myself that I can't afford this or that, I spend some time organizing my bookshelves. I always find materials I had forgotten about -- books that I can use at the basis of a new unit study.**

Express gratitude instead of discontent

Whenever discontent raises its ugly head, ward it off with gratitude. Don't just stifle the complaint. That's not enough. Replace it with rejoicing.

- I have a library card in my wallet that is a gateway to endless free resources.
- I have a healthy child with a bright mind and special giftings.
- I have an Internet connection that delivers instructional videos and teaching ideas.
- I have a printer that can create reams of free printables.
- I have time to develop my relationship with my daughter instead of rushing off to work.

Each one of these affirmations directs my soul back to the amazing provision of God, and I can't entertain an ungrateful heart any longer.

Keep your eyes open to opportunity

When I see a great book bargain at a thrift store, I snatch it up. I know that God led me to that store on that day to find that particular title. I know that He will use it in my daughter's education. It doesn't matter if it doesn't fit my planned course of study. It is a resource that God will probably use on one of my "shelf shopping" sprees.

I stay on the alert for free museum passes and discounted theater tickets, seeing them as a gift from the Lord to help me teach my daughter. I look for extracurricular activities that are low cost or free -- things like church activities or 4H. When I hear of an expensive summer camp my child would love,

I don't bemoan the cost. Instead, I pray and apply for a scholarship, trusting the Lord to provide if it is his will or close the door if it is not.

The bedrock foundation of our frugal homeschool is that God is sovereign. **He will provide in His way and in His time. Paul said, "I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want." (Philippians 4:12, NIV) If Paul were a homeschool mother he may have added "whether I have plenty of money for curriculum or hardly any."**

By trusting the sovereignty of God, I can be thankful and content-- without guilt-- during both times. I can assure you that He has *always* provided a wealth of learning opportunities for my child. And He *will* do the same for your children. Trust Him.

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Heart Song- Growing Your Children's Passions in your Homeschool

Have you ever really thought about what makes your child's heart sing? I bet if you thought about it, you could name the thing that would do it, for each of your kids. **Isn't it delightful when you can capture it easily enough and share it with your child?**

That's what our daughter's art desk was all about. I knew it would make her heart sing. She spends hours and hours there working with paper and other craft media to create. It wasn't a fancy birthday present, but I knew it would speak to her heart long after the other presents were forgotten.

One of the things I think is important as a parent is to **engage our children often enough** that we really know what they are passionate about. How do you know? How do you find out? Does it require expensive lessons and lots of venues for trying out lots of things? No, I don't really think so. I think the resource it requires the most of is *our time* as parents. When we invest time in our children, it's easy to figure out what brings them joy.

We have four children and as they have grown older we have no doubts as to what they are passionate about. Our oldest is just about 11 and he loves games. He is a gamer for certain and one of his favorite things on this earth is to play games with us and with his friends. He loves science, math, reading, playing baseball and soccer and following Virginia Tech Football (Go Hokies!). The younger two boys are still growing and the more time we spend with them, the more we get to know the things they love most.

I already mentioned our daughter loves to create- she loves to do art and to craft things. She loves to sew and to learn American Sign Language. A common theme for her is creating with her hands.

She is so talented at using her hands and it shows. We feed these passions as much as we can without adding too much to our schedule.

*The concept of not adding too much to our schedule really brings me full circle to my post from last month on [Keeping the Home in Homeschool](#). **How can we fuel our children's passions without racing around constantly?***

In his book, *The Hurried Child*, David Elkind discusses the phenomenon of busy children. Children who are on the go so much, families rarely enjoy a common time together.

I think one thing I struggle a bit with even as a homeschooler or maybe because I *am* a homeschooler is all the music lessons and sophisticated things we can get our kids into...is my child at a disadvantage if I do music appreciation and basic music theory but not push formal instrumental lessons or choir training?

One of the best things we can do for our kids is to learn what makes their heart sing and to pursue *that* with our time and resources- rather than every little thing that comes along. **Do you value/use/remember every opportunity you had as a kid? It's not likely. In fact, I would almost say I'm at a deficit because I joined everything and tried many things. I still do it as an adult. I want to try a lot and to be good at many things. Thankfully, my husband is around to keep me in check.** Though he would argue I still do too much. Less is better is his motto.

There's a big difference between a kid who enjoys soccer recreationally and probably is even very good at it and the kid who is serious scholarship material. Do we invest gobs of family time to soccer at an intense level in that case? Real talent, aptitude and desire is really different from- this is fun. This is fun can be handled differently with pickup games and friends. That changes the atmosphere of the activity and how often it must be done.

One reason our family has chosen to do 4-H over Scouts programs is because it's a unifying activity. Our daughter and our sons can participate together as a family and we don't have to run all over to drop some boys here and our girl there. They can pursue their interests in 4-H in our homeschool and proudly take their work to the fair every summer.

I mentioned last month that our children are generally permitted to be in one "thing" of their own at a time/per season. So, when new opportunities arise, we have to make choices. **Recently, my daughter was able to take a sewing class at a local refashioning sewing classroom.** She adored her time there and can hardly wait to return. Before we enrolled her in a class, she had been sewing for a year. Her grandmother started a project with her last summer and she did so well with the machine that we signed her up for co-op sewing classes. There were two that semester- one a beginner class and one an advanced class. I figured the advanced class was an independent study and she could

work at her own pace no matter what it was. Once I knew she was on fire to sew, I had no problem spending our resources of time and money on the outside class.

For us that is the key...introducing activities at home before investing a lot of money and especially *time* outside the home. **Our son wanted to learn to play the guitar so we invested in a basic child's guitar and some instructional books.** It's been a terrific way to teach basic music theory and it gives both of us a chance to see how strong the desire to play guitar really is. If it is strong and it shows, then we can look for lessons for him in a way that is the least disruptive to our family life.

Our children are well aware of the one activity rule and they make decisions based on what they really want to do rather than indulging in it all just because it is fun. When our daughter finished her sewing class this week she very excitedly announced she was willing to give up softball in the spring to continue with the sewing shop.

The concept of pursuing our children's passions in our homeschool is something we work on daily. It is the goal toward which we want to be purposeful. We certainly have our children in activities outside the home things like soccer and baseball and sewing occur in regular seasons at our house. It is important to know our children well enough to know what makes them soar- even if it is only for a short season. The fact is, even if I wanted to indulge my children in all the activities (whether long term like a sport or short term like a fun outing) they might choose, I simply cannot accommodate the time or the financial resources four children would require to do so. Not to mention that an overscheduled family cannot spend much needed time together. **Instead, we work hard at home to fuel the passions we see in our children and make wise decisions about how we can further pursue a delight for them in an outside venue.** Isn't that one of the hallmarks of homeschooling? We enjoy the freedom to explore more with our kids and to help them find out what it is they enjoy- without outsourcing it all the time.

And in turn, this leaves us more time in our homeschool to explore the extraordinary. Enjoy the journey. Passionately.

Heather is the owner of BlogSheWrote.org and is the homeschooling mom to the fantastic four – two in high school, one in middle school, and one last elementary student. She is a former middle and high school biology teacher who has embraced the independent nature of homeschooling, and she mentors her children through authentic, student driven projects and learning adventures.

Taking the “School” Out of Homeschool

I don't know why we use the term home*SCHOOL* sometimes. I have been finding more and more when we take the word “school” out of our day, we actually learn much more. I spoke last year at the [Heart of the Matter Online](#) conference about [Education as an Atmosphere](#). I want my home to be a continuous atmosphere of learning. Not a 9am -3pm time of enforced drilling of facts.

A typical day in a homeschool looks like LIFE. **It can range from anything from:**

- a day of research on a topic of the child's choice
- an afternoon spent listening to Mozart while painting
- a day in the yard observing an ant hill, a robin's nest, or a bee hive
- a morning gardening, while learning all about compost, seeds, and zone planting
- writing creative stories, plays, or poetry
- a construction project in the home. complete with preliminary plans, blueprints, and the execution of the plan with the proper tools
- cooking up an authentic cultural feast after weeks spent reading about that country
- analyzing the nutritional content of your pantry
- grocery store math, while grocery shopping
- a day out to see a play or visit a local museum

- a visit to the local nursing home
- writing a letter to your sponsor child in Africa
- designing buildings on the computer
- helping with the finances by watching dad pay bills and budget (or do taxes!)
- chores, chores and more chores...all life skills!
- figuring out the how to build rockets, legos in 3D, and more
- raising chickens
- spending the day at work with dad as a mini-intern
- learning all about how day to day life works by being immersed in it and not a classroom!

The list is truly endless. Life is a classroom. Life is what we are preparing our children for. What better way to learn that with the hands on lesson of life?

I have found lately when I loosen the structure *{not throw it away}*, the kids are more free to pursue their interests and that is when they truly learn.

When I don't see a separation between learning and life...they thrive...

Karen DeBeus is a homeschooling mom learning to live more simply and keep God at the center of it all. She loves writing about simplifying and sharing with others how her family uses the Bible as the main textbook in their homeschool. She is the author of two best selling eBooks, [Simply Homeschool: Having Less Clutter and More Joy in Your Homeschool](#), and [Called Home: Finding Joy in Letting God Lead Your Homeschool](#). Visit her over at [Simply Living for Him](#) and [Bible Based Homeschooling {on a budget.}](#)

Homeschooling for FREE or Nearly Free

Many of us have been downsized in a variety of ways. I'm the first to raise my hand. We're living in an uncertain economy, jobs are being lost and pennies are being pinched. There are families' questioning if they can afford to continue homeschooling, let alone afford to start homeschooling.

I would encourage you that God will provide for your family and the homeschooling vision that he has placed in your hearts. He has for ours, every step of the way.

The most valuable learning our family enjoys tends to cost the least. An example from recent days is we devoured the book "Where the Red Fern Grows." I found free online study guides, free clip art, and videos on You Tube showing coon hunts, raccoons and the Ozark Mountains. We pulled a massive amount of learning from this one book and have a lapbook to show for it (full of projects, vocabulary, copy work, etc.) We borrowed both versions of the movie from our local library and our children had a great time picking out differences between the movie and the book. This literature study didn't "cost" us anything except lapbooking supplies, which are inexpensive, and a trip to the library. Through this study our oldest boys,

10 & 7, learned that the author, Wilson Rawls, favorite writer is Jack London. Can you guess our next literature study? That's right; we're currently lost with Buck in the northern wilderness in the adventure of "The Call of the Wild."

Tips for successful free, or nearly free, homeschooling

The Internet

Preaching to the choir, huh? It's true though, and we need to remind ourselves before we buy the next latest and greatest piece of curricula, or before we take on guilt because we can't afford it. It seems some mom, somewhere online, may have just what you need. Here is the *tip of the iceberg* of great sites, full of freebies, unit studies, lapbooks and more, [Freely Educate](#), [The Stonesoup Network](#) and [Homeschoolshare](#). Even the practical details like [math](#) and [language arts](#), including [spelling](#), [grammar](#) and [story starters](#), can all be found free online. This year we've been studying creation science and have found everything we need on the [Answers in Genesis](#) website and coupled it with a free [dinosaur/creation](#) unit study and lapbook. (We topped it off with a trip to the [Creation Museum](#), not free, but full of powerful exhibits and inspirational learning, and attended a free AIG conference with a scientist speaker.)

The Bible

I'm often asked what curriculum I use for teaching bible. My answer; the bible. Even though our older boys read it themselves daily, I still read it to our family aloud. As I read to them, we're open for the Lord to speak to us. The questions raised by our children and the spiritual insight, which is taken in at our kitchen table or while snuggled together on our living room couch, is priceless. We use the bible for copy work and of course for character training (*mom's character training more often than not.*) Psalms and Proverbs are great books for copy work. We also use a [free audio bible](#) to play during meal times or throughout our day.

Library

I take the reading lists from my favorite shiny curriculum catalogs and order the books I need from our local library. Many libraries offer an online book request service. All I have to do is place my order online, then at my convenience, walk in our library door to pick up our materials. Of course just taking my troop to the library and letting them discover great books is always fun and free.

Last time we went through check out with our huge stack (We have trouble showing restraint when it comes to books) the librarian said, "Wow, you must homeschool!" Our local library also has a wonderful summer reading program and activities throughout the year. Don't forget to check you library's schedule.

Roadschooling

I try to find free {or nearly free} locations, events, museums and experiences that coincided with the different topics we study. Check back, I'll be writing more about this. For starters, check with your state homeschool organization, they should have a list of events.

Thrift Stores

I'm incredibly blessed every time I go into a thrift store. I have found countless classics and other quality materials for 10cents to \$2. If a book has a Newberry award seal, it's mine! Not long ago, I found an entire collection of books on Egypt. The other day, my 7 year old pulled out this stack and for over an hour during breakfast he immersed himself in Egyptian history. *Who says you cannot study pharaohs over oatmeal?*

Homeschool Group-Free Box **God bless the moms who are good about cleaning out and passing on items they're done with. It seems a mom is always bringing a box full of free goodies to a group meeting. I've picked up storybooks, handwriting workbooks, educational videos, etc. It's always a blessing. I'm sure your group wouldn't mind if you brought a box of goodies to give away as well.**

Social Media

I've listed on social media items I've needed. Usually someone has what I need somewhere. I have a friend who lists her gently used curricula and educational items on Facebook. She makes a photo album, posts a picture of each item for sale, as well as the price she'd like and shares it with her friends. It's a great way to declutter for her and a quick way for other moms to pick up great deals.

Used Curriculum Fair

These are popping up more and more. The things you feel you must buy, you can save 50-90%. Check out your state homeschool convention as well. Many of them host a used curriculum fair. I try not to start drooling as I walk in the door.

Non-consumables

I purchase products that are non-consumables. Of course I'm coming from the mindset of a continuing growing family (as I say, I have 30 years of homeschooling left). I make sure they're products that we can s-t-r-e-t-c-h!

The Dollar Store

In Virginia, they're called The Dollar Tree. There I've found quality, colorful, and downright cheap workbooks for PreK-3. They also have art/craft supplies, poster boards, and office supplies.

Ink Refill Kit

This has been invaluable to our homeschooling. I'm always printing off worksheets, craft projects, lapbook templates or note booking pages. The ink refill kits can usually be found for around \$10. We have refilled our printer for an entire year on one kit.

I encourage you that no matter your financial situation, you can provide your children with an outstanding education. For 2009-2010, we spent \$50 for our entire year, while taking pleasure in historic locations and events, keeping ahead of grade level objectives and enjoying timeless classics (let alone making memories that will last a lifetime.)

With a little research, Godly guidance and creativity, you can discover everything you need to have a free {or nearly free} homeschooling adventure through this life style of learning!

How to Add Fun into Your Homeschool Lessons for Free

Homeschooling can be expensive. When you consider the cost of curriculum, supplies, and activities it adds up quickly. I need to buy programs for our core subjects every year, but in general, I try to be as creative, hands-on, practical, and frugal as I can. My favorite thing to do is incorporate items we already own into our homeschooling plan, especially “toys.” Lessons become more interesting for my girls, and I save a ton of money because I’m re-purposing something I’ve already spent money on.

Here are a few things we use for more than just playing:

American Girl Dolls

Yes, I know these dolls are anything but frugal, but I figure if you’re going to shell out the money for one of them, you might as well use them as much as you can.

For years, we have used the American Girl dolls to study US History.

My oldest daughter **LOVES** history and I feel it is in part because of how much she enjoys American Girl dolls and their stories.

To incorporate them into our lessons, we read their books and [do activities related to their time period](#), like those found in their supplemental books. For example, when we studied 1824 with Josephina, we painted wooden treasure boxes and made Mexican hot chocolate.

We already own many of the dolls’ books and I am usually able to check out a number of the supplemental books from my [public library](#).

The books and activities give my kids a more personal frame of reference for history. When we study a major event, like the Great Depression, they already have a basic understanding of it because of Kit and can relate her story to others we read about.

Board Games

Do you have a shelf of board games in your closet, gathering dust?

- Make a plan to get them out and see what lessons you can learn by playing them.
- We own a game called [Number Rings](#) that sat on our shelf for years. Now I use it to review mental math functions with my girls.
- It's a lot more fun than sitting down working with flashcards!

What can you learn from a board game?

- *Payday* can teach finance skills
- *Chess* teaches critical thinking
- *Monopoly* requires strategy and negotiation
- *Trivial Pursuit* can be used to study or review all kinds of subjects
- The list can go on and on.

LEGOs

Who doesn't have a bin full of LEGOs?

There are so many educational things you can do with these little bricks. Use them for *math, architecture studies, creative writing, science, history, and more.*

I plan on using them in our upcoming history lessons to recreate some of our national monuments.

Maybe you own one of their educational kits which you could pull out again, or perhaps there is a [First Lego League](#) in your area that you could join.

My favorite resource for working with LEGOs is definitely Pinterest. There are endless ideas on there for using them in your homeschool.

We all own so much stuff. I want to challenge you – the next time you need something to supplement a lesson, see if you can find it on a shelf or in a closet.

Save yourself some time and a lot of money!

What are some things you already own that you can start using for school?

[Megan Zechman](#) is a wife and homeschooling mom of two beautiful girls, living a dream life as a Disney family in Central Florida. I co-own Education Possible, a site dedicated to helping families find creative ways to learn together. I'm passionate about hands-on learning, drink way too much sweet tea and love all things glitter.

College Scholarships for Homeschool High School Credit

Homeschooling parents are busy! The homeschooling lifestyle can keep you hopping as you shuffle attention between kids, work, spouse, the house – the list seems endless sometimes. That’s why it’s important to combine things when you can. When your children are in high school, there is a great two-for-one strategy that can save you money.

You can skip paying for some curriculum, which saves you money, and instead complete college scholarship applications so you can hopefully earn some money.

Save money and make money – two birds with one stone!

Search for private scholarships during high school. Often, these scholarships will include a written essay. They may also require the student to submit other work, produce a video or audio, or submit a work of art. You can count each of these things as work for credit on their transcript.

Think about how each task can fit into your curriculum. Writing an essay could count towards a credit in English. Creating a video might count towards a technology or arts credit. An art project can be included in a visual arts credit. If your child does a lot of scholarship writing, that could even be your whole English curriculum for the year!

Combing the internet and finding scholarships isn’t easy, and takes a lot of time. But when you consider the cost of college today, scholarships are definitely worth pursuing.

Finding scholarships is just the tip of the iceberg though, because after you find them, you will need to filter them down to only the ones which your child is eligible for. Did you come across a scholar-

ship especially for tall people? Don't laugh, they're out there! This won't work for your child if he or she is only 5'1".

After filtering through them, it's helpful to record the various scholarships you want your child to apply for, and keep track of due dates, requirements, etc. Consider mapping out deadlines for rough drafts and final drafts of essays and projects in a planner, or on a calendar, for your child so the deadlines don't sneak up on you.

Remember to help your child follow through with each application! This is perhaps the most difficult part. As the parent, you can do a lot of the initial legwork for scholarship applications, but your teenager must ultimately write the paper or produce the product.

It can be hard work, and that's why you can award them high school credit for it. **Now go out and get those college scholarships!**

If you would like to learn more, check out my Coffee Break Book for Kindle or Kindle app (affiliate link), [College Scholarships for High School Credit: Learn and Earn With This Two-for-One Strategy](#), just \$2.99 on Amazon.

Or pick up this special deal on my A la Carte online training class. [College Scholarships for High School Credit Parent Training A la Carte class](#) is normally \$15 but you can get it for just ONE CENT when you use coupon code hscrcrcent. Just one penny!

I have another freebie for you as well!

[FREE Ebook! Finding a College You Love](#)

You have cared, nurtured, loved, and protected your child for 18 years. Now comes the hard part! You need to somehow find a college that you love, and that will love your child. Colleges love homeschoolers for their academic preparation, socialization, and specialization. They love us and they want us at their school.

Right now, colleges and universities around the country are salivating at the chance of getting their hands on your kids AND your money. Today's wise parent MUST learn to discern high pressure sales tactics embedded in today's "big business" universities, smooth-as-silk marketing claims that mix the truth with lies, and moral and ethical lingo which hides a "Christian-in-name-only" reality.

One essential strategy for finding a college you love is to VISIT. Plan ahead, and arm yourself with knowledge! You only get one chance to do this right and the stakes couldn't be higher. Learn to find a college you can love!

Lee Binz, The HomeScholar, is a dynamic homeschool speaker and [author](#). She is an expert on how to craft a winning [homeschool transcript](#). Lee understands what it takes to graduate homeschool students who are fully prepared for college and for life. Her practical advice and organized presentations have helped thousands of homeschool parents muster up the courage to complete their homeschooling journey. Lee's mission is to encourage and equip parents to [homeschool through high school](#). Sign up for her free homeschool e-newsletter, The HomeScholar Record, at www.TheHomeScholar.com. You can also find her at Facebook.com/TheHomeScholar.

How to Teach Homeschool Art Without a Curriculum

Art is one subject many homeschoolers struggle to teach. There are a lot of well-done programs on the market, but to be honest with you, all you *really* need to teach art is a few reference books, art supplies, and time to explore! Let's look at some key factors to having success with art in your homeschool.

Find Artwork that Speaks to your Child

Start your art studies by going to an art museum. If possible, go often! Let your child lead the way as you look at the paintings and sculptures. (If you don't have an art museum near you, [there's an App for that.](#)) Encourage them to take their time, and find a piece they really like.

It doesn't really matter which picture it is, as long as it speaks to them. When they tell you they have found their favorite work of art, ask them a couple questions about it. *What do you like about the picture? What do you think the picture is about?*

Write down the name of the piece and the artist, and when you get home, run a quick Google search on it. Save the biggest image of the piece you can find, and print it off. Place this picture in a binder, just for them, of their favorite works of art, which will be their main art notebook.

Learn About the Artist and Their Time Period

If you would like to teach your children more about art history, pick up [The Annotated Mona Lisa](#). This book is ten bucks, and has everything you really need to know about art history. This book is my favorite because most famous artists are well-represented, and it's written in a clear tone.

I use it in my elementary art classes because it shares stories the kids can relate to, and it's easy for me to read the information for myself and then teach it to my kids. Older students can read it for themselves, and if you'd like, take notes to put with the picture in their art notebook.

Check the index for the artist your child selected at the museum and read up on that artist's time period. If the artist they selected isn't represented in the book, try looking up the art movement.

Imitation Inspires Creativity

Next, get out some paper and supplies and sit down with your child to imitate the work of art. I've learned with my younger art students that it's best to imitate the *style* rather than the art itself. For example, if you're looking at *Starry Night*, you want to see if you can imitate the swirly, whirly, short lines instead of trying to paint something that looks like the original. If you're looking at a Picasso, ask if your child can draw a picture of you in the same style.

[20 Do-It-Yourself Homemade Art Supplies](#)

Help your child see the details that make that particular painting special. Is it the colors that they love? Is it the subject? Or the way the lines move across the paper? Even if they can't pinpoint it, most children will be able to put something on their paper if you sit down with them and say, "Let's make our own picture like this!"

Let them decide *how* they want to accomplish the task, and encourage them no matter how the art turns out. They can imitate the art as many times as they want!

If you'd like more guidance and examples on how to do this, you can see examples I've done with my art students for these Artists: [Van Gogh](#), [Pollock](#), [Daumier](#), [O'Keefe](#), [Cezanne](#), and [Picasso](#).

Improve Skills

The more art your children make, and the more masterpieces they see, the more their own art will improve. If you want an inexpensive book to give them more skills and techniques to use, consider picking up [DK Art School](#). This huge book covers everything you need to use many different mediums, and is appropriate for older kids to self-teach.

In art, there really isn't a *wrong* way to do things. Even the Masters are constantly changing their technique and trying new materials as they create. In my art classes, I only have one *big* rule, and that rule is you don't say negative things about your work.

Nothing is a mistake, it's just an opportunity to try something new! If your child gets upset by a wayward stroke, or something that doesn't turn out exactly the way they anticipated, try and encourage them to see what they could turn their mistake into!

Surround Them With the Right Tools

If you really want your children to learn more about art, the best way to do so is to provide them with good quality materials in a place they have easy access to. Set up a shelf or drawer in your home with charcoal drawing pencils, watercolor pencils, paints, pastels, and all sorts of creative goodies.

Don't forget to also place water cups, paper towels, and cleaning wipes with the art supplies so your children can properly care for their supplies.

[Free & Frugal Ways to Learn Art in Your Homeschool](#)

Then comes the hard part. Let your child use their art supplies whenever the mood strikes them.

I know it's hard to just let your kids get creative sometimes, especially if they tend to be messy. Teach them early to respect their materials, and put the responsibility to care for brushes, paints, and pastels on their shoulders. Even young children can be taught to wash out their brushes carefully, wipe up paint spills from the bottles, and clean up pencil dust from their workspace.

If supplies are well cared for, they will last a long time, which will save you money!

Continue Enjoying Art!

Repeat these steps often with your children. In our house, we try and choose a new work of art each week to focus on. You can either pick the art for your children, especially if you are learning about a specific place or time period, or follow the instructions above for your child to pick a piece of art that speaks to them personally.

Encourage your kids to add art to their Art Notebooks whenever they come across something they love, and use their notebooks for inspiration when they sit down to make their own art. They can also add a section to their binders just for work they made from their own imaginations!

Don't forget that Picasso said, "Every child is an artist." Help your child see the value in their beautiful creations.

Be sure to check Free Homeschool Deals for additional [free art curriculum and resources for your homeschool!](#)

Heather is a military wife and proud mama of three kids. She blogs at [Only Passionate Curiosity](#) all about homeschooling and their adventures in Europe. She loves art, photography, and saving money! Check out her [Free Homeschooling List](#), full of quality resources to help you homeschool on a budget.

Finishing Out the Homeschool Year When You are Way Behind

Maybe it's just me. Maybe I'm the only homeschooling mother who starts the year, every year, with the best of intentions and the greatest of hope only to find myself drowning by mid-year. It's possible I'm the only one, but I kind of doubt it. You see, I never thought I'd be a teacher. I honestly never *wanted* to be a teacher. I disliked school and brought home report cards that earned me a tongue-lashing and a hefty dose of shame. I'm simply not teacher material.

But then I had kids. The moment they placed that first baby in my arms, I instantaneously became both a teacher and student. It was incredible and breathtaking but mostly it was terrifying.

Fast-forward through the birth of a few more children and into the year my oldest turned 5. Decision time had arrived and I did what any perfectly sane person, in way over their mothering-head, would do. I opted to homeschool without a single clue how to begin. And so it began.

Eleven years later I still feel clueless far more often than I care to admit. I still start each year with great intentions and a fool-proof plan. Every year is going to be better than the last, only it never is. I hang my head in defeat, absolutely certain I'm a homeschool flunkie and that my kids will never make it through the 12th grade. I mean, how could they when I have to google how to do my 6th grader's math problems?

You think I'm kidding and I only wish I were.

So, here we are with spring upon us once again and all the little songbirds are beckoning school kids everywhere to make haste and pack away the books for another year. Only my kids aren't done. And I'm starting to despair that the year will ever end. But then it hits me...

They'll never be done. Life *is* learning. Period.

It isn't workbooks or projects or field trips or experiments, although those things certainly can add to the experience. And it isn't staying exactly on schedule. Sometimes it's realizing you are behind and scurrying to figure out what parts can be skipped without leaving gaps.

Good teachers learn to improvise when they find themselves in a pinch. The only possible way I could ever label myself as a "good" teacher is because I am nearly always in a pinch and have become a master at improvising.

Just this week I sat down and X'd out pages we could afford to skip over. *Gasp!* I put big, red X marks on entire pages that seemed like busy work. By the time I was done, I felt like we'd collectively lost about 100 pounds of unnecessary stress and I wished I had done it sooner. Then just for fun, and because I like my kids to like me, I went a step further.

I gave them access to some (extra) really great reading material.

We started plans for a garden.

We made some rough sketches for a chicken coop.

We bought some paint so they could each brighten up the walls of their room.

We threw on some boots to trek through the spring mud in search of forest treasure.

And they never knew what hit them.

They love it when they think they're getting away with something. *I* love it when I can trick them into loving learning at the very same point in the school year in which they are wishing the learning would just stop already.

You know, it's entirely possible that we'll finish out the school year ahead, after all.

(Author note: I am not typically a workbook-style homeschooler but in this season, in this moment, it is what we needed. I always, however, encourage mothers to gift their children with the ability to learn in a hands-on fashion.)

[Kasey Norton](#) is a writer at heart and mom by profession...and only an awesome God could meld those two passions so they aren't in direct competition with each other. A firefighter and seven children fill her life with a healthy dose of sweetness while He works the kinks out in her rather ruffled character. You can catch her writing at WalkingRedeemed.org.

Homeschool for Free Using the LEGOs your Child Already Owns + FREE LEGO Writing Printables!

If your child loves LEGO® bricks as many children do, finding ways to incorporate LEGOs into your homeschool will inspire and motivate your child to learn. So think of some areas where your child needs a little motivation. What does he struggle with? What does she fight you over? Those are the areas where LEGOs can make the biggest difference in your homeschool.

With a little planning and help from the internet, you can teach anything with LEGOs!

I recently asked on our Facebook page, “What are the current obsessions of your kids?” Almost everybody responded with “LEGOs.” Everybody loves LEGOs! ([Post](#) by [Homeschool Encouragement](#).)

So you might want to take the biggest area of struggle in your homeschool and try to incorporate LEGOs into teaching that subject first. In our home, one of the biggest areas of struggle was anything involving handwriting. Nobody wanted to practice printing or cursive anymore, and after all, “Why should we have to, Mom? It’s the digital-age, right?”

I won’t have my children graduate from high school unable to communicate with the written word, so I came up with the idea for [my free LEGO Notebooking Pages](#). We use these pages in our homeschool for any subject where writing is involved and the LEGO pictures to color on every page make my kids happy.

I am amazed at the difference the right paper can make!

Handwriting is not the only thing you can teach with LEGOs though! The tactile nature of LEGOs makes them perfect for teaching many subjects in math. I've [gathered free LEGO printables](#) to teach ratio, perimeter, area, fractions, division, multiplication, and geometry just to name a few.

Math is not the only subject that benefits from the tactile use of LEGOs either. What if you want to teach the alphabet? You can find that too! Need to teach chords for music study? You can find LEGO lesson plans for that online! Struggling to inspire your history studies? Build the pyramids! Trying to memorize Scripture? Print the words on Lego blocks and start stacking. Need to add art to your homeschool routine? Why not [art with LEGOs](#)?

When you have an area of struggle in any subject, a quick search for [LEGO lesson plans on Pinterest](#) will help you find exactly what you need. And if you can't find exactly what you are looking for when you search Pinterest — you will find plenty of examples of lessons others have taught using LEGOs and find the inspiration you need to create your own LEGO lesson plans.

You can do this, mom! You can take the LEGOs already scattered around your home and underfoot and turn them into tools that teach your children whatever they need to learn.

Would you like to get started with some free LEGO writing paper? Just click on each image to download your own copy and be sure to stop by Homeschool Encouragement, where we have new [Free LEGO Printables Weekly](#).

Amy Blevins is the owner of [Homeschool Encouragement](#), where she blogs about LEGOs, and anything else that might inspire your homeschool. Amy lives with her husband and six beautiful children in Southern California. Besides blogging, Amy enjoys homeschooling, hiking, reading, singing, teaching, and serving Jesus above all.

The Big List of Free and Frugal Bible-based Homeschool Resources

Welcome to my BIG list of Bible-based homeschooling resources! My family loves to use the Bible as our core in our homeschool, and there are so many great resources around the web that are FREE and FRUGAL. Here are some of the best of the best I have found, including some ideas we use in our own homeschool!

First, no homeschool can succeed without covering it in prayer. Here is a [FREE 31 Days of Prayer booklet](#) to help you focus on specific verses to pray over your homeschool. You can also print out this [FREE Mother's prayer printable](#) to keep you encouraged on your daily journey.

Here are some resources I have divided up by topic for you. I hope you enjoy this list! It is such a blessing to be able to teach my children using the Bible and so many of these wonderful resources!

Karen DeBeus is a homeschooling mom learning to live more simply and keep God at the center of it all. She loves writing about simplifying and sharing with others how her family uses the Bible as the main textbook in their homeschool. She is the author of two best selling eBooks, [Simply Homeschool: Having Less Clutter and More Joy in Your Homeschool](#), and [Called Home: Finding Joy in Letting God Lead Your Homeschool](#). Visit her over at [Simply Living for Him](#) and [Bible Based Homeschooling {on a budget.}](#)

Missions

[FREE Missions resources from World Vision](#)

[Prayer with Operation World](#)- Pray for a different country each day

Lapbooks

[Parables of Jesus free lapbook](#)

[FREE Bible Lapbooks](#)

[FREE All About Me lapbook](#)

{Always} FREE eBooks

[4200 FREE eBooks](#)

[FREE Bible based Kindle Books](#)

[Understanding the Times](#) by Ken Ham

[Theology eBooks](#) from favorites such as Spurgeon, Tozer, Washer, Pink, Edwards, Piper, and more

[FREE Church History and Theology eBooks](#)

[FREE R.C. Sproul Series](#)

[Bible Memory resources](#)

[FREE Bible Memory Cards](#)

[FREE Matthew Bible Reading Journal](#)

[FREE Sermon Notes](#)

[Doxology Hymn Study](#)

[FREE Fruits of the Spirit Study](#)

[FREE Amazing Grace Hymn Study](#)

[FREE Bible Memorization Resources](#)

Games

[BibleWise](#)

[Outdoor Bible Verse Scavenger Hunt](#)

[Indoor Bible Verse Scavenger Hunt](#)

[FREE Books of the Bible BINGO](#)

[Bible Based Resources from Intoxicated on Life](#)

FREE Curriculum

[FREE FaithBuilders Curriculum](#) (using Legos)

[FREE Curriculum](#) from proverbial Homemaker

[Free Preschool Bible Curriculum](#)

[An Old Fashioned Education](#)

[Ambleside Online](#)

[Easy Peasy All in One Homeschool](#)

[FREE Bible Lessons](#)

[FREE 3 years of curriculum from Kidology](#)

[FREE Reading Curriculum- Phonics by the Book](#)

[FREE Armor of God Study](#)

Science

[Free Nature Study Printables](#)

[FREE Printables for the Periodic Table](#)

[FREE Resources from Answers in Genesis Kids](#)

[Using the Garden as Our Classroom](#) (blog post)

[Bible Based Gardening Resources](#)

[FREE Creation Resources](#)

Planning and Chores

[FREE Curriculum planning sheets](#)

[FREE Bible Lesson Plan Printable](#)

[FREE Cleaning Schedule Printable](#)

[FREE Chore Chart Cards](#)

[FREE Chore Chart](#)

High School and Planning

[FREE High School Transcripts and Portfolio Printables](#)

[FREE Homeschool Planner](#)

[FREE Bible Songs for Kids](#)

Printables

[FREE Family Verse Printables](#)

[FREE Bible Coloring Pages](#)

[FREE ABC Scripture Cards](#)

[FREE Jesus Loves Me Printable](#)

[FREE Narration Worksheets](#)

[Our Favorite Bible Based Resources](#)

[FREE David and Goliath Coloring Pages](#)

[FREE Alphabet Pages](#)

[FREE Notebooking Pages](#)

Apps

[The Bible App for Kids from You Version](#)

[A Good Word Free Bible App](#)

[Hymn Lyrics App](#)

History

[FREE Ancient Rome Printables](#)

[Free Ancient Rome Writing Prompts](#)

[Ancient Rome Resources](#)

[The Story of the Romans FREE eBook](#)

[FREE Egypt Pack](#)

[FREE Ancient Egypt Unit Study](#)

[FREE Bible Verse Resources- Genesis](#)

[FREE Noah's Ark Writing Prompts](#)

[FREE Printable Bible Town Figures](#)

[Where Jesus Walked](#)

[FREE Bible Maps, Timelines, and Charts](#)

[FREE Adam's Descendants Timeline](#)

Copywork

[Ten Commandments Copywork](#)

[FREE Cursive Handwriting Sheets](#)

[FREE Handwriting Sheets- The Study of Ruth](#)

[FREE ABC Cursive Bible Printables](#)

[FREE Scripture Copywork](#)

[FREE Character Resources and Handwriting sheets](#)

Help for Homeschool Moms

[Must-Have Books to Inspire Your Journey](#)

[The Homeschool Mother's Prayer Journal](#)

Other Helps

[Netflix](#)- get one month FREE!

[Yellow House Book Rental](#) (rent, buy, or buy used books)

[Our Most Tried and True Bible Based Resources](#)

[Favorite Bible Based Read Alouds](#)

One thing we have used often this year in our homeschool is sermons. You can read about [how we use sermons in our homeschool to further our Bible studies](#).

Free and Frugal Homeschool Art for All Ages

In the last several years I have learned a few things about art as a homeschool mama. Guess what? Art resources do not have to be expensive. We really can enjoy art frequently. All our ages can “do” art together. It’s not hard! Really! See, a few years ago, my mother (Nana) shared chalk pastels with me and my five children. By sharing her love of chalk pastels, my mother opened up the door to the pure joy of art. Yes, we’d been doing paint with water, colored pencils, and paints. But with chalk pastels we found simple success.

Before then, I struggled with enjoying art in our homeschool. First, I had a hard time with saying yes to art and [getting over the mess](#). Then, I would get discouraged with the huge list of supplies I read was needed. Not only the lengthy list of supplies, but the sheer cost for our family.

But with chalk pastel art, only three things are needed – 1,2,3!!

- A set of chalk pastels the family can share (less than \$10)
- Paper (we often pull from the family printer)
- Art Tutorials

*Well, and baby wipes or wet paper towels are handy for clean up. Here’s a video of the [Very Few Must Have Supplies for Chalk Pastel Art](#).

So in addition to my story, I share with you the gift my mother gave us: links to her free art tutorials plus a brand new tutorial perfect for all your ages.

First, the free tutorial! Here’s Nana...

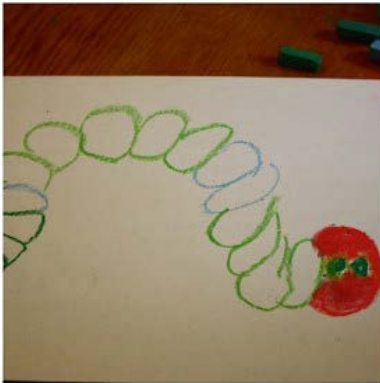
Caterpillar Chalk Art Tutorial

Supplies needed: simple set of chalk pastels, paper, this tutorial

Chalk pastel colors: green, purple, red, yellow, blue, brown

Caterpillar Chalk Art Steps:

1. Turn your paper horizontally and begin by picking up your green pastel and drawing a curving line of circles linked together. This is your basic shape for the caterpillar. The head is larger, draw it with



your red pastel, give him some round green and curious eyes, a purple or blue nose and a big smile. How about some purple antennas? (I know, they look like ears!). Then he has to have some little red or brown feet...you can make him have 6-8 feet or a whole caterpillar full of feet!



2. I am going to make my caterpillar with greens and blues so he can hide safely in the grass or on a big leaf. If you just lightly color each round segment or part of the caterpillar, you can take your finger and gently brush in the rest of the color in each circle. I outlined the circles in a deeper blue or green to make him more colorful and vivid.

3. Now there he is, hanging out there in the middle of a big white sheet of paper...poor thing, let's put him on a big green leaf! You can just draw an oval shaped leaf around the caterpillar and he will be safe from being picked up by a hungry bird. Just a few finishing touches of your choice like a vein in the leaf he is sitting on, and a lot of tiny feet all on the outside of his body.

4. Look at your wonderful painting of the springtime caterpillar! Just think how hungry he is and ready to go eat a snack! Be sure to sign your name on the corner, flip your painting over, and name it and date it. Great work! And, as I always say: You ARE an artist! Now how about a snack for you too!

Now you can make your caterpillar as big as you'd like – it's your painting! You can also create the food he eats through in the style of Eric Carle's *A Very Hungry Caterpillar*, with our free tutorials below:

[Strawberry Chalk Pastel Art Tutorial](#)

[Tomato Chalk Pastel Art Tutorial](#)

[Apple \(or Pumpkin\) Chalk Pastel Art Tutorial](#)

[Watermelon Chalk Pastel Art Tutorial](#)

Even More Free Homeschool Art for You!

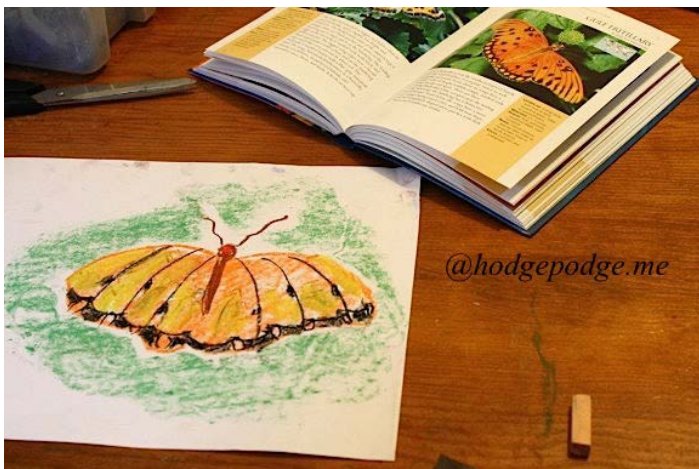
[100 Free Chalk Pastel Art Tutorials](#) – pin it or bookmark it to use over and over!

[Free Acrylic Paint Art Tutorials](#)

Even more free video tutorials on [our Hodgepodge YouTube channel](#) (be sure to subscribe!)

There are step-by-step lessons on how to use chalk pastels to draw tornadoes, beach scenes, winter fun, trees, hot chocolate, and much more. The chalk pastels are so simple to use, making art easy for kids of all ages. Inexpensive and wildly successful art adventures are easy with this collection. [A Simple Start in Chalk Pastels](#) is one that the kids will keep asking you to use again and again—learning at its best!” ~ Amanda Bennett – Unit Studies by Amanda Bennett

“These tutorials have been a real answer to our family for art time. While we’ve found other instructional resources we use as well, this one just gets us down and dirty DOING art... Though my kids sometimes struggle with perfectionistic tendencies (I can’t imagine where that comes from!), they have learned that chalk pastels are a forgiving medium, and they can make mistakes, get messy, and come up with their own individual expression of an art piece.



More Free Caterpillar/Butterfly Resources for You!

[Butterfly Chalk Art Tutorial at Hodgepodge](#)

[Free Butterfly Resource Unit at Free Homeschool Deals](#)

[Hands On Science: Raising Butterflies with Free Study Download by Education Possible](#)

Our readers asked that we compile all our tutorials in one spot. We've done that – and you might also be interested in our [Art Curriculum for All Ages](#).



I am all about free, frugal, and a short list of supplies (same goes for recipes for me). How about you?

Homeschooling for over a dozen years now, Tricia faces a daily dose of chaos with five children from preschool to high school. She and her mother are co-authors of [art curriculum for all ages](#) and a series of cookbooks at [Hodgepodge](#). She and her husband, Steve, are also owners of [The Curriculum Choice](#) and [Habits for a Happy Home](#).

How to Teach History in Your Homeschool for Free

History is one of the easiest subjects to teach for free. We live in an age where information is readily available and costs nothing. All you need to know is *where* to get it and *how* to deliver it in a memorable way. History textbooks are a wonderful addition to any homeschool and well worth the price tag, but don't believe for a minute that they are critical to a good education. Consider the following sources through which you can have access to the same information.

The Library. There's a saying that goes, "All you need to homeschool is love and a library card." Libraries are a homeschooling goldmine where you can access virtually any book, video, or audio on any given subject. Here's a great article from [Simple Homeschool](#) on how to make the most of this public resource.

The Internet. When used properly, the Internet can be very helpful for homeschoolers. Researching information online is quick, easy, and can save many trips to the library. The downside is that the Internet contains plenty of misinformation and fictional articles which are misleading. Technology is not harmful in and of itself, but the misuse of it is. Take the time to find reliable resources for your children to ensure that the Internet works to your child's advantage, not their detriment.

Here are a few online history-related resources which I've found to be reputable:

[An Old Fashioned Education](#)

[Digital History](#)

[Hyper History](#)

[Smithsonian Education History & Culture](#)

[The History Guide](#)

[The History Place](#)

People. Yes, people – especially older people. There are nursing homes full of men and women who are ready and willing to share their stories with anyone who will listen. If you want history to come alive for your children, let them hear it from the voice of experience.

The events of World War II will become so much more than a list of facts when they are personalized by a survivor's retelling of that frightful era. Your children will have the opportunity to understand in a very real way that the purpose of learning history is two-fold: 1) to explore God's providential workings in His own world and gain a better understanding of our ruin in Adam, redemption through Jesus Christ, and regeneration by His Holy Spirit, and 2) so we would be kept from error and repeating historical mistakes.

Places. Check your local travel and tourism center for a list of all the historical places which are free and open to the public. Give your children a hands-on approach to their historical education by visiting museums, landmarks, monuments, parks, memorials, and other heritage sites. Bring along a handbook if you're navigating the area by yourself, or opt to use a tour guide.

[Jacinda](#) Vandenberg is Brad's bride, a second-generation homeschooler to three, passionate homemaker, lover of medium roast coffee, and a sinner who is deeply thankful for Grace. She blogs at [Growing Home](#), a site dedicated to gospel-centered family building, holistic homemaking, and whole-hearted homeschooling. Jacinda is the author of the [Growing Your Blog While Managing Your Home](#), the *1777 New England Primer Manuscript* and *Cursive Alphabet Printables*, and a co-author of [Homeschooling Day by Day](#) and [The Pursuit of Motherhood](#). You can connect with her on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Google+](#), [Pinterest](#), or visit her [home on the web](#).

How to Write Your Own Homeschool Literature Study Guides for FREE {+ free eGuide download!}

Most homeschool moms love literature. With this love there comes a desire to find a study guide that will help establish a deeper level of understanding. There are homeschool companies built around providing only study guides. The cost of guides can range from \$2 to \$25 dollars each.

Yes, there is excitement when a good quality guide can be found for FREE!

In **homeschooling for free**, I have written a guide on how to write your own. This guide is directions and questions to help students write their own study guide. *Sorry, this freebie requires providing your own work.*

Write your own study guide:

First select a book from your local library or your personal collection.

I would recommend a children's book for elementary students.

Middle school kids can chose between a children's book or a chapter book.

High school students should start with a middle school chapter book.

Brainstorming session for study guide:

Download a FREE copy of [How to Write Your Own Study Guide](#).

Copies of other study guides completed.

Paper and pencil to record ideas.

Looking at other study guides, discuss what were your favorite and least favorite parts of the guide. This will help you decide what you would like to include in your own guide.

Read “How to Write Your Own Study Guide.” Discuss any questions you have with the guide. Determine a deadline for when your study guide needs to be completed. It can take one to two weeks to complete writing your own guide.

Students might find it beneficial to discuss [learning styles](#) in the brainstorming session. They should try to include different kinds of activities for each style of learning. Yes, sometimes study guides only consist of questions and answers. It will be the choice of the parent and student to determine what they want to include in their guide.

Expanding the lesson on writing your own study guide:

After the guide is completed, discuss the publishing steps. Look at the jobs of editors, proofreaders, layout designers, and graphic artists.

Research the costs of printing. Compare the cost difference between an e-book and printed book.

Begin a Study Guide Co-op. Invite friends to write study guides with you. Then share everyone’s guides at an author’s party.

[Stacey Lane](#) is a wife, mother, teacher, jill-of-all-trades, and a member of the Bright Ideas Press team. Her many gifts include visual thinking, bringing order out of chaos, thinking outside the box, and taking charge (when needed). When she’s not developing curriculum or contributing to her blog at [Layered Soul](#) she homeschools her own four children. **She is notoriously, amazingly frugal and has shouted, “I’m Debt Free” on the Dave Ramsey show!**

The Secret Ingredient Every Homeschool Should Utilize

They say that talk is cheap. Usually “cheap” is meant in a derogatory sense. But when it comes to homeschooling, *talk is cheap*. No, really. Ok, maybe to get away from the negative connotations of “cheap” let’s substitute a favorite word over in these parts – *frugal*. Or better yet, let’s call it what it is – FREE! In a day and age where you are told at every turn to buy this or buy that, I’m here to remind you that you have one of the biggest ingredients to homeschool success right on the tip of your tongue.

Dialogue.

It’s powerful. While it won’t cost you a dime, there is an investment of time. For most of us, the beauty of relationships factors high on our reasons to homeschool. So conversing with our children is a natural outflow.

While it may seem like a “no biggie,” talking with your kids packs a powerful punch. So what do I mean by talk?

Dialogue is different than a lecture. It is a two-way conversation. Homeschooling provides a wonderful opportunity to employ this in so many areas – during daily life, when we are [reading aloud](#) to our kids, when we are out and about, and my favorite: in the car.

Opening up dialogue with your children is a potent way to accomplish the following things:

Dialogue helps promote understanding. When we talk with our children there is two-way communication going on and we can insure that our children really understand what we are trying to

convey. This is practically impossible to accomplish in a classroom setting since the teacher-student ratio is so much larger.

Dialogue promotes retention. As your children explain what they are learning, or ask questions along the way, they are learning. The act of verbalizing what they are thinking about and processing cements information into memory in a meaningful and organized way. It enables them to better utilize that information later on too. That can't happen when they aren't given the opportunity to talk!

Dialogue demonstrates understanding. When you are homeschooling your own kids, the need to do a book report or history test simply isn't as important as it is in a classroom situation. You *SEE* your child reading and then over lunch you can discuss the book. You can ask some of the **who, what, when, where, and why questions** to draw out what they are getting from their reading. The same holds true for testing knowledge. I do this all the time and call it [Incognito Testing](#). My kids don't even realize they are being tested. It is truly genius.

Don't underestimate the value of this relationship-building, knowledge-growing tool. Simply taking the time to explore and then share your discoveries and observations with one another goes a long way not only towards building their minds, but also in preparing for life-long learning and critical thinking.

Pursue the conversation, cultivate learning.

As a homeschool graduate now in the trenches homeschooling her 4 children, Heather Haupt is passionate about being intentional, about cultivating relationship with the Lord and preparing to launch her children into whatever kingdom work God has for them! Learning is a grand adventure and a rich experience when we stop trying to replicate 'school at home' and embrace a home where we learn. Because of that, she likes to bring in a dialogue rich, literature heavy, hands-on element to all their learning adventures. She delights in encouraging and equipping families towards intentional parenting, pursuing God and delighting in the adventure of learning as a family. She's the author of *The Ultimate Guide to Brain Breaks*. You can connect with her at her blog, [Cultivated Lives](#) or on [google+](#), [facebook](#), [pinterest](#) or [twitter](#)!

50 Homeschool Science Experiments (that cost next to nothing)

Science is one subject where it is easy to feel as if you have to spend a lot of money in order to give your kids an interesting, hands-on learning experience. There may be the temptation to buy expensive equipment such as microscopes or telescopes. However, in order to give your kids the chance to explore the world around them and experience science experiments that will wow them, you need to look no further than your backyard or kitchen.

Many of the items needed for these experiments are probably sitting in your cupboards already. Others can be purchased at the dollar store or grocery store and are very inexpensive.

On the next page is a list of some of the science experiments you can do at home that cost little to no money:

Sharla Kostelyk is the mother of seven, two through the miracle of birth and five through the miracle of adoption. She is a homeschooler, adoption advocate and the founder of [Adoption Magazine](#). Sharla is the author of [That These Two Will Live](#) and [Shield: A Framework of Self-Care for Foster and Adoptive Families](#). She blogs about finding joy amidst the chaos at [The Chaos and The Clutter](#).

[Gravity Defying Beads](#)

[Skittles Density Rainbow](#)

[Simple Chromatography](#)

[Jello Eruptions](#)

[Balloon Experiments](#)

[Melting Ice Experiment](#)

[Extract Iron from Breakfast Cereal](#)

[Frozen Bubbles](#)

[Experimenting Colouring Flowers](#)

[Colourful Celery Experiment](#)

[Pop Rocks Science](#)

[Elephant Toothpaste](#)

[Balloon Rocket Boat](#)

[Penny Cleaning Experiment](#)

[Dancing Raisins](#)

[Bean Seeds](#)

[Coke and Menthos](#)

[Make an Anemometer](#)

[Gravity Experiments](#)

[Ivory Soap Cloud](#)

[Jelly Bean Science Experiment](#)

[Rainbow Science \(Absorption\)](#)

[Exploding Sandwich Bag](#)

[Cabbage Juice pH test](#)

[DIY Lava Lamp](#)

[Snowstorm in a Bag](#)

[Freezing Liquids](#)

[Milk Commotion](#)

[Exploring a Vacuum](#)

[Simple Science Eruption](#)

[The Pulley](#)

[Designing and Building Bridges](#)

[Melting Frozen Hands](#)

[Magnets](#)

[Gummy Worm Science](#)

[Floating Egg Science Experiment](#)

[DIY Thermometer](#)

[Oreo Moon Phases](#)

[Sparkly Snow Volcanoes](#)

[Easy Kitchen Chemistry](#)

[Sink or Float?](#)

[Dancing Oobleck](#)

[Red Bull and Milk Reaction](#)

[Exploring How Water Travels Through Leaves](#)

[Colour Mixing](#)

[Spinning Eggs](#)

[Marshmallow Science](#)

[Candy Experiments](#)

[Floating Grape Science Experiment](#)

[Experimenting with Viscosity](#)

Free (and unexpected!) Library Resources for Homeschoolers

What do you think of when you hear the phrase, “free library resources?” Books? DVDs? Today’s libraries offer so much more! With an internet-connected computer and a valid library card (and sometimes a pin number), thousands of free resources are available to you!

Interlibrary Loan System

Most libraries are connected with an interlibrary loan system, and you are able to check out books from libraries all over the country. Ask your branch about their system. Most of the time you can request books online and they’ll find them for you.

Online Databases

Libraries have a wealth of online resources (databases and e-sources) on their websites for students. What’s great about these? They’re “referred” sources—true, authoritative sources far better than Google. Search your library’s website for “e-sources” or homework resources.

Field and/or Resource Trips

Plan a field trip to the library. The children’s or youth services librarian will be happy to make your visit so much more than just a tour of the library. One of the things the librarian can do is show your group how to use the online resources available to them. If you’re working on a specific unit or project, she can also gather materials for you and/or help you and the children find materials.

Book Clubs for Children

Many libraries have book clubs for children. My librarian friend Judy Gann has a weekly children's book group at her library. "Most of the attendees are homeschoolers," says Judy. "This is a great way for homeschoolers to participate in a group activity. Most of these book clubs meet once a month, and the library staff will tell you the book for the next month ahead of time so you can determine if it is appropriate for your child."

Book Club Kits

Some libraries offer book club kits for children. Most kits consist of twelve to fifteen copies of a title with discussion questions if you'd like to do a book club with other students.

Programs

Most libraries have monthly school-age programs at the library during the school year. And don't forget the summer reading program! Many libraries have special classes or programs. Looking at our local library's schedule, these are some of the things they offer: Family Movie Night, Knitting Circle, Theatre Camp, Writer's Workshop, Snack Attack (Cooking), Finger Knitting, Lego Block Parties, Puppet Shows, and Storytime. If you have an idea for an activity you'd like to coordinate, talk to your local librarian.

Training Programs

Some libraries will schedule computer classes for your children if you ask.

Shannon: *"My library offers free classes of all kinds for kids: art, science, history, etc. They also have language programs I can access through them for free online that I will use to help teach Hebrew next year."*

Booklists

Libraries have a variety of booklists of suggested titles for different age groups and on many subjects.

Homework Help

Many libraries provide a link to "Homework Help" on their website. Some libraries give you access to websites like Tutor.com for free!

Ryan: *"My daughter uses a program from the library for her to learn Chinese."*

Lesson Plans

Our local library system provides Arkansas history lesson plans. Some libraries also provide curricula support. Libraries can develop customized booklists, webliographies, and study guides tailored to the unique needs of students. Even if these services aren't available on your library's website, ask a local librarian if he or she can offer this service.

Art Galleries

One of our local libraries hosts an art gallery for students to view.

Museum Passes

In a partnership with local museums, many libraries provide free passes to local art, history, and children's museums. **Warning:** These are very popular and are often checked out. Check with your local library to see what's available.

Computers

In addition to public computers and wireless access, some libraries have laptop checkout. (Some restrictions apply.)

Dial-a-Story

Our local library has a dial-a-story program. Every day the kids can call a special number and listen to a new story!

Free Media

Many libraries have a virtual branch where you can download audio books to your PC or Mac. You can then transfer this media to your iPad, Nook, or other devices. Our branch also has a virtual reference library with a digital movie catalog, digital music catalog, and digital magazine library! My library uses Hoopla for the digital access, and once I log on via my library it works similar to a Netflix account!

Books by Mail

Some libraries mail books to patrons free of charge. You must have a disability to qualify for these services.

Bonus Material

Some libraries loan more than books. Here's a list of what some libraries offer:

Cathy: *"Puzzles games and toys at our library."*

Lisa: *"I worked in a library where we loaned out puppets."*

Cynthia: *"Ours has passes to some museums and games. Oh, and they have the seed library!"*

Jeanie: *"Local museum & zoo passes."*

Aquilla: *"Paintings."*

Holly: *"GPS for geocaching."*

[Tricia Goyer](#) is a busy mom of six, grandmother of one, and wife to John. Somewhere around the hustle and bustle of family life, she manages to find the time to write fictional tales delighting and entertaining readers and non-fiction titles offering encouragement and hope. A bestselling author, Tricia has published thirty-three books to date and has written more than 500 articles. She is a two time Carol Award winner, as well as a Christy and ECPA Award Nominee. In 2010, she was selected as one of the Top 20 Moms to Follow on Twitter by SheKnows.com. Tricia is also on the blogging team at MomLifeToday.com, TheBetterMom.com and other homeschooling and Christian sites. In addition to her roles as mom, wife and author, Tricia volunteers around her community and mentors teen moms. She is the founder of Hope Pregnancy Ministries in Northwestern Montana, and she currently leads a Teen MOPS Group in Little Rock, AR. Tricia, along with a group of friends, recently launched www.NotQuiteAmishLiving.com, sharing ideas about simplifying life. She also hosts the weekly radio podcast, Living Inspired. Learn more about Tricia at www.triciagoyer.com.

Free Homeschooling with Netflix, Amazon, and YouTube

While homeschool families spend far less per child (with better results) than public schools, homeschooling can still involve a number of expenses. To take one example, curriculum prices range from free to many hundreds of dollars, depending on what you need for your children. Whether you are using an all-in-one curriculum, or mix and match a variety of books and programs, you are likely on the lookout for good video supplements to help bring your school subjects to life. Exciting movies and engaging documentaries can make any subject more interesting.

Problem: DVDs cost money to rent or buy, and you may need many such videos in the course of a school year.

The Internet has vastly increased your options for videos, and many are available at the two best prices: cheap and free.

Within the world of online media, there are some services that are free for your family with a subscription (that is, after purchasing a subscription, you can access many videos for free), and others that are absolutely free, with no subscription required. In this article, I will share what I have found to be the best options for finding videos to supplement homeschooling in a variety of subjects and ages.

So let's get started.

When you have a subject that you feel could be helped along with a video or movie, it's time to go searching. My three favorite resources are Netflix, Amazon, and YouTube. (Want to know which of these three is my top favorite? Wait until the end of the article, and I will tell you!)

Here's an overview of each, going from most expensive to least expensive:

#1 – [Amazon](#). With an [Amazon Prime Membership](#) (which now costs \$99 for the year), you not only get free two-day shipping with every purchase, but access to [thousands of Amazon Prime streaming videos](#), TV shows, and movies. Amazon has decorating shows, cooking shows, classic movies, and documentaries, all [free with your Amazon membership](#). You can also watch new movie releases, more classic movies, and much more for a small rental fee.

Amazon Tip: Besides the free stuff, you can rent many more videos from \$0.99 and up, including new episodes of current TV shows the day after their showing (in case you have cut the cable like we did many years ago).

#2 – [Netflix](#). With Netflix, you have options for streaming videos for around \$8. For access to rental DVDs, you will need to pay more, starting at \$15 and going up. I have found that most of their good documentaries and Bible movies require the rental, as you will rarely find them among the streaming options. However, there are lots of kid's TV shows, movies, and preschool learning videos (like Leap Frog and Signing Time) on streaming that can fill your queue.

Netflix Tips: if you are accessing your list through your gaming system, you will not find as many options listed. For this reason, it is best to use a computer to add videos to your queue. Also, you can have up to five lists on your account; some people have one for parents, and one for each of the kids. I recommend setting the lists up by subject categories: e.g., Bible, Family (for family movie night), History, Preschool, Science, etc.

#3 – [YouTube](#). This resource seems to have been overlooked by many homeschool parents. YouTube is not just for DIY videos and funny baby or animal clips. You can also find educational videos, documentaries, TV shows, classic movies, and cartoons.

The one thing that limited my use of YouTube in the past was the need for everyone to squeeze in around the computer screen to watch any YouTube videos or movies. No longer! There are many different ways to watch YouTube now. Our favorite is the free [PLEX app](#). We have a [Roku](#) player, and we just “plex” whatever video/movie we like to our TV and watch from the comfort of our couch. It's easy!

There are new options coming out all the time for watching YouTube on your TV; apart from apps like PLEX, you can also connect your laptop or phone to the TV with the correct cord/cable (which varies with each TV).

YouTube Tip: be warned that there are some videos with a link to “watch the full movie/video on this external site.” Don't click through. It is most likely spam, or a link to a membership site.

So those are the top options.

Whichever route you choose, you'll want to search for terms that best describe the place or time period (e.g., Medieval, knights, west, Egypt, Rome, etc.). Also try using proper names of persons or events (George Washington, Moses, Battle of Midway, etc.).

Or, if you want to avoid long online searches, save time and energy by checking out our website: [Cross and Quill Media – Christian Homeschooling with Netflix, Amazon, YouTube, and MORE!](#) At Cross and Quill, we have done a lot of the searching for you, so you can quickly find just the right video for your Bible, History, or Science course. We also have a [Facebook group](#) we would love to have you join. We may have exactly what you are looking for; if not, share what you find, so we can add it to our growing list of resources.

By the way, if you haven't figured it out yet, my favorite resource for online media is YouTube! We have found a much larger selection of Christian videos and movies to watch there, plus some great old shows like Green Acres and The Beverly Hillbillies. If I can't find something on either Netflix or Amazon, I know that I can find it on YouTube.

Angela Newsom is a homeschool mother of five kiddos under 13 years of age. She started the website Cross and Quill Media to help her keep track of all the great resources she was finding to use on Netflix, Amazon, and YouTube. Her favorite things to eat are anything raspberry or pumpkin, and she has a DIY project list for the house that she can seem to never get finished. Her new addiction is Flea Market Flip now available on Amazon.

Affording Single Mom Homeschooling

“How can you afford to homeschool as a single mom?”

The question is uttered more frequently than any other. And it’s a fair question. The odds are stacked against a single mom when it comes to homeschooling. Shoot. The odds are stacked against a single mom regardless. Statistics have conveyed that single moms experience at minimum a 40% decrease in their standard of living upon divorce, not to mention the many other unique circumstances they face.

It’s only natural to think that homeschooling is an impossible goal. **Oh, but my friend, it’s not.**

I probably don’t need to remind you of that little verse...”with God nothing is impossible” (Luke 1:37). Of course, that’s true whether it’s the financial aspect of homeschooling or the physical exhaustion of having more to do than one person should have. God is able to do beyond what we can think or even IMAGINE! (Eph. 3:20)

Welcome to FHD’s 3rd annual event, Homeschooling for Free and Frugal Series! Click here to begin reading all of the new [Homeschooling for Free and Frugal](#) articles. This article is by Kim Sorgius of [Not Consumed](#).

So how does a single mom afford to homeschool?

1. I ask God to provide.

I know that you probably don’t want a “Sunday school” answer, but the truth is, I would be nowhere in this process without this step. God has to be the one to decide that I’m homeschooling, not me. And if He calls me to it, then I KNOW He will equip me to do it! (1 Thes. 5:24) I can trust the promise that He will equip me mentally, physically, and financially! And what a beautiful promise that is!

2. I make sacrifices.

Of course, this isn't to say that I don't have a part in this. I certainly do. Like any homeschooling mom, there are sacrifices that must be made in order to make it happen. Truthfully, this is a hard part. I grew up wanting a huge house with a white picket fence, a brand new Lexus, and a closet full of clothes that had no holes in them. Then one day it all fell apart and I realized the blatant hypocrisy of all that. All I really want (and need) is Jesus.

Yes, that means we have bare pantry shelves sometimes.

It means we have holes in our clothes because they have been passed down through three other families before they get to us.

It means we have downsized over 2,000 sq. feet in the past few years.

It means I will likely have no social life, no retirement fund, and very little sleep to go with it.

But I promise you, it's all worth it. Every moment I have with my kids, I am reminded of the beautiful joy and privilege of having them right here with me instead of waving from the window of a big yellow bus. I'd much rather have them than my own "happiness" or any other material thing in this world. And if this one sacrifice I make means I have no retirement fund or no large collection of fancy clothes when I'm 50, it will still all be worth it.

After all, for what purpose is my life if it isn't to pour out everything God has given me into their precious souls?

3. I seek creative employment.

Of course, we must have money to do this thing. So the first thing I did was throw out the idea of a traditional job and began exploring my skills for options that would keep me home. I looked at what I liked and what I was good at and then I formed a business plan around that.

I won't lie. I work 50-60+ hours a week developing my business. That creates an interesting dynamic for choosing the activities which are left in the day. But one day, I won't think about all the sleep I lost or how dirty the house was. I'll remember spending the morning at field day cheering on my sweet athletes or nearly blowing up the kitchen in a science experiment.

Better yet, my children will remember the same.

So what are my practical money-saving tips for affording to homeschool?

1. **Tithe.** Yep. If you give your money to God, you won't run out. He promises.
2. **Don't buy it.** Really, you don't need it. The less you have, the less you need to clean anyway!
3. **Ask a friend,** if you can't see a way to live without it. Facebook is great for this. Use it to ask if someone has size 2T clothes sitting in the garage. Maybe you can borrow them or maybe you can buy them cheap. Or you can ask for homeschooling materials, yard supplies, pretty much anything you need!
4. **Find it used.** Seek out local consignment sales, frequent Goodwill, and become a Garage Sale expert. You will find it hard to pay full price once you get good at it!
5. **Make sure you get a good price.** Don't buy anything unless you know you are getting the best price, even if it's only \$5. You know that's how they get you at those ever-so-temping \$1 bins. Some things are a good deal. But MOST are worth way less than \$1! Don't be caught thinking that just because it's a small amount of money, it doesn't matter.
6. **Shop online.** Many things are cheaper online, plus you have the added savings of gas and time. I consider it a huge bonus that I won't be tempted to throw that cute sweater in the cart. My [Amazon Prime membership](#) has paid for itself 100 times over this year!
7. **Shop smart** when it comes to groceries. Just because it's a necessity doesn't mean you should throw all caution to the wind. Food is the #1 way people waste money. Don't throw it away. Take the time to find ways to save!
8. **Barter services** with friends and neighbors. Can you mow his yard while he does your taxes? Or maybe you can babysit for someone in exchange for a haircut. Think creatively!
9. **Ask for a discount.** I know this is a hard one and I struggle with it, too. But you'd be surprised how many homeschooling companies would be willing to work with you, if you asked! This goes for other companies, too!
10. **Drink water.** This probably seems like a silly tip, but did you know that water is free? (Well, you already pay for it anyway.) In our house there is no milk, juice, or other kind of beverage unless it's a special treat. This saves a ton of money!
11. **Portion out breakfast and snacks.** I know the need to make fast and easy breakfasts and I know that you can get a box of cereal pretty cheap with a coupon. BUT, that box of cereal is about half wasted in my home. Probably yours too. I started rationing out the cereal when I created our [Breakfast Station](#). It's been a huge time and money saver!

I'll be honest, homeschooling wasn't my original plan, but God had worked on my heart and it was working quite well for us in 2009 when I became a [single mom](#). I can't imagine giving it up now. Oh how glad I am that God didn't let me quit!

If you are a single homeschooling mom desiring community, please join our Facebook group at [Homeschooling Alone](#).

[Kim Sorgius](#) is just a girl, crazy in love with Jesus. She's a [single mother](#) of 4, a passionate [homeschooler](#) and life-long student. After teaching 8 years in public school, she traded her M.A. in Early Childhood Education for sippy cups and homeschool co-ops. Visit her at [Not Consumed](#) or [The Homeschool Village](#).

Frugal Ways to Teach Music in Your Homeschool

Music doesn't have to get left behind in your homeschool. So often I've heard people say they "don't have the finances" to teach their children about wonderful music, get private music lessons, or take part in musical ensembles. There are so many ways to incorporate music FRUGALLY in your homeschool, so let's get started!

Exposure

It doesn't cost much (or sometimes anything) to expose your children to beautiful music, and I think this is the first step in cultivating an appreciation. Simply immersing your children in the classics is easy.

Favorite Resources

[Pandora](#) – turn on the “Mozart” station and you'll be set!

[Songza](#) – similar to Pandora – use the music concierge to decide what music to listen to.

[YouTube](#) – search for composers/artists and create a playlist (just be careful of comments!)

[Beethoven's Wig](#) – these are great CD/mp3 collections which cement the classics into anyone's head, and at just \$10/download they are an affordable investment in music education

[Classics For Kids](#) – simple CD/mp3 collections that are affordable and present the staples of classical music

Appreciation

Learning about a composer's personality, time they lived in, and personal challenges fosters quite an appreciation for their music. A part of this is also composer study – for a HUGE list of resources on this, see [The Ultimate Guide to Composer Study](#).

After exposing your children to music and the composers' lives, you can easily teach them how to *appreciate and critically listen* to music. Just as we teach our children about different genres of literature and how to examine them, children can learn about the elements of music and learn how to critically listen.

Favorite Music Appreciation Resources

[Harmony Fine Arts](#) – affordable plans for any grade level – these are well done and thorough

[SQUILT Music](#) – music appreciation made easy for the non musical parent! [Free lessons](#) are available, and affordable [entire volumes](#) are available for purchase – 100% internet linked; all you need is an internet connection and basic school supplies! Kids love **Super Quiet UnInterrupted Listening Time!**

Lessons/Ensembles

How can children frugally take part in private lessons and/or ensemble music groups?

Tap into your local homeschool group or music teacher's association to find out about junior music teachers. In our community the local music teacher's association actually has junior teachers – trained high schoolers who give private lessons for a greatly reduced rate. You have to do some investigating, but it's worth it!

In our family we have made sacrifices in other areas so that our children can take private piano lessons. We see this as a huge investment in their future. There are many price points to piano lessons, so do your research and talk to people about teachers they like. Still have questions? Visit [What About Piano Lessons](#) to get some answers!

Many areas also offer homeschool bands, orchestras, and choruses, for either free or a very small fee. There is something so valuable about making music with others – it is an experience your child will remember FOREVER!

Whatever you do, PLEASE don't let fear of teaching music or lack of finances stop you from giving your children the gift of music. It is my mission to equip parents to give their children the very best music education possible, in a non-threatening, inexpensive, and enjoyable way! Visit me at [Home-grown Learners](#) or [SQUILT Music](#) to explore more!

Mary Prather

Frugal Homeschool Preschool

Before I was completely [sold on homeschooling my children](#), my oldest daughter attended preschool one year for three afternoons per week. It was a small church preschool and I loved her teacher, but it was still quite a bit of cash out of our pockets every month. I knew we could easily **save a ton of money** by doing preschool at home!

As the years have passed and all three of my girls have “graduated” from preschool age, I’m more convinced than ever that less is more. You definitely don’t have to spend much money to give your child an amazing preschool education!

In fact, here are my top five {inexpensive} recommendations for preschool on a dime:

1) Fill Your Home with Books on the Cheap

We are avid readers at our house, and there are baskets and shelves of books everywhere. Most of them have been acquired inexpensively—from garage sales, Goodwill, and auctions, but we also make good use of our library and inter-library loan privileges. The girls often ask for and receive books as gifts, too.

While I still prefer bound, printed books for my young children (*they need to touch, experience, and manipulate physical pages*), classics and other books can also be acquired for free or inexpensively for your digital eReader. I’ve been able to fill up our Kindle with [all kinds of free and discount eBooks](#).

Whether you choose to do a formal preschool curriculum at home or you choose a more relaxed approach, read often and enthusiastically with your children. It’s so important! (*You can find my top [Seven Tips to Raise a Reader here](#).*)

2) Make Time for Playtime (Indoors and Outdoors)

In our hurry-up world, we sometimes forget how important play is for our children. Many of the skills our children need for the future can be acquired through play: problem-solving abilities, gross and fine motor skills, sequencing, various social skills, and more.

Unfortunately, I've found that more and more babies, toddlers, and preschoolers are spending large amounts of time with technology and [some of the research on what this is doing to our children's brains](#) is concerning. While limited use of electronic devices and TV may be okay, open-ended, imaginative play is far superior for your young child—and it is inexpensive, too!

Make a dress-up box with clothes from a thrift store, scoop and pour water with bowls and measuring cups, build with boxes, make a store or “cook” with recycled food boxes/cans from your kitchen, or create a blanket fort. The ideas are endless—just be sure to give your child time and space to explore.

3) Create Some Learning Bags

A [Learning Bag](#) is simply a learning activity in a bag (*or box or basket*). Some call them “busy bags” or “activity bags,” but no matter what you call them, learning bags can be a sanity-saver with preschoolers (*especially if you have older children you are homeschooling*)!

When I had preschoolers, I kept these in totes (*one container for each day of the week*) and pulled them out for my youngest daughters when I needed to work with my oldest. I also stored a few in my purse or diaper bag to use while we were waiting at the doctor's office or restaurants.

You can find quite a few ideas on my website for [busy bags you can easily make yourself](#). You can also find a [free downloadable eBook called Learning Bags, Baskets, and Boxes](#).

4) Involve Your Child in Everyday Life

It's never too early to train your child to help around the house, and it is much easier to build a good foundation right from the start. Preschoolers can easily help with:

- Dusting (a sock over the hand works well)
- Sweeping (with a small hand-held broom)
- Picking up toys (music makes it fun)
- Putting away laundry
- Getting dressed

- Unloading the dishwasher
- Pouring and mixing ingredients for cooking
- Setting the table
- Watering plants — indoors and outdoors

You can find an idea for a simple [“Helping Hands” Chore Chart](#) or make your own [printable chore chart](#). Jamerrill also has a [printable age-specific chore list](#).

Including little ones in cooking projects is also a great way to teach them new skills—math, fine motor, gross motor, serving others, and many more. You can find [a few tips and age-appropriate cooking tasks for preschoolers here](#).

A few kid-friendly budget recipes:

- [Resurrection Cookies](#) (with printable recipe)
- [Easy as Apple Pie Snack](#)
- [Homemade Pretzels](#)
- [Cook-A-Doodle-Do Strawberry Shortcake](#)
- [S’Mores Cones](#)
- [Easy Crockpot Applesauce](#)
- [Banana People](#)
- [2 Ingredient Popsicles](#)
- [5 Peanut Butter & Banana Snacks](#)
- [Flag Fruit Pizza](#)
- [Thunder Cake](#)

5) Utilize Your Printer and Internet Resources

Many moms like printable preschool packs, and they can definitely be used to help strengthen and build fine motor skills. Some children really love them, while others do better with more hands-on type activities (*screwing lids back on jars, picking up beads with tweezers, scooping and pouring beans or rice, etc.*). I'm personally a fan of play-based activities for preschoolers, but I did supplement with a few printables. Here are a few of my favorite sites to find printables for preschoolers:

- [Free Homeschool Deals Printables](#)
- [Royal Baloo Preschool Printables](#)
- [3 Dinosaurs Preschool Printables](#)
- [This Reading Mama Preschool Printables](#)
- [Homeschool Creations Preschool Printables](#)
- [1+1+1=1 Preschool Printables](#)
- [123Homeschool4Me Printables](#)
-

I also have a few printable packs available:

- [Calendar Binder Printables](#)
- [Printable Number Rhymes](#) (helpful for teaching your child how to form numbers)
- [A is for Apple](#)
- [G is for Garden](#)
- [X Marks the Spot](#)
- [Z is for Zoo](#)

You may also be interested in my free [hands-on preschool curriculum called God's Little Explorers!!](#)

I had a great time putting it together and made many sweet memories with my daughters.

Remember, no matter what kind of curriculum (*or non-curriculum*) you do with your preschooler, be intentional about making memories with them. Read, play games, cook, and have fun together. Time goes so fast. Soak it up!

What are some of your favorite, inexpensive ideas for preschool at home?

[Stacie Nelson](#) is the creator of MotherhoodOnADime.com and the newly-created HomeschoolingOnADime.com. She is passionate about encouraging moms and giving them creative, yet simple, activities to do with their children. A bargain-hunter by nature, she enjoys sharing deals and freebies. She also loves extra dark chocolate, jogging, writing, cooking dairy and gluten-free, and attempting to declutter her book-filled rooms. Faith and family are her top priorities, and she seeks to encourage others to live life on purpose.

How We Homeschool for Next to Nothing

If you are reading this article, my guess is that you are already a frugalista who is open to learning more or someone who is looking to learn what homeschooling for free and frugal really looks like. Well, I'm hopeful my words will help provide a little bit of insight for both! **If you are anything like me, you like to get a good return on investment (ROI) in everything you do during your day – particularly in relation to time management.**

It doesn't matter what it is, whether I invest money or time, I am always looking for the best way to maximize my investment. Don't get me wrong, I am not saying that I don't do things out of the goodness of my heart for free with no strings attached, I am more referring to time management. I think as homeschool parents it is our duty to live out stewardship of time and money to the fullest—it is a great way for our children to learn about it too. And it's biblical!

Most of us are aware of the obvious ways to homeschool for free or cheap:

Take free and nearly free field trips like those mentioned in [40+ Free & Frugal Family Activities](#).

Subscribe to sites like Free Homeschool Deals to get the latest and greatest homeschooling items for free or next to nothing.

Utilize your local library instead of buying books you may or may not ever need again.

Shop at used curriculum fairs.

Sell your curriculum and use the funds towards purchasing next year's curriculum.

And then there are sites like vegsource.com and Ebay.com and even amazon.com (and others) where you can find used curriculum for cheaper than retail.

A Penny Saved Is A Penny Earned

Now on to something that you may or may not have considered: *every penny you save is a penny you earn.*

I, for one, grew up with this saying coming at me from both of my great-grandmothers. And while they would always tell me this, and it was a part of my vocabulary, it wouldn't be until later in life that I understood how solid the truth in this statement really is.

Consider this: make a note of every time you save money on something. That's right. Every.single.time. This will give you a good indication of just how much money you are actually saving by making frugal choices. For our family, we tallied up our savings from January 2014 – March 2014 and found out that we had saved a whopping \$2,769.13! Yes! We saved that much money by making wise financial decisions.

What do I mean by wise financial decisions? Let me show you.

Here are some of the ways we earned \$2,769.13 in the first three months of 2014:

1. **Using printable coupons.** While we are not extreme couponers, we have found that doing a [quick online search for coupons](#) of the items on our shopping list and printing them off pays off big. You can find a [great coupon database to do so here](#). Not that we are against clipping coupons, but the truth is, we'd rather not have to do that.
2. **Using apps to save big on groceries and other items.** You can learn about 5 apps that can save you hundreds on your grocery and household budget [here](#).
3. **Earning cash back for all online shopping.** You can find some amazing cash back sites in this article: [Get Paid To Shop Online!](#)
4. **Menu planning.** We have been using [eMeals](#) for the last several years. There are several plans (including special diets like GF and Paleo) you can choose from. This takes the guess work out of meals and helps curb any waste by assigning each item on your list to a meal. This alone has cut our grocery bill down by at least \$200 each month compared to last year.

So what's next?

We take every last dime that we save from the aforementioned ways (and many other ways) and put them into our savings account. This ensures that when it comes time to purchase our homeschooling curriculum, it ends up being entirely free. Isn't that exciting? We have found, as with anything, the more you do it, the better you become!

I encourage you to continually come up with [creative ways to make your budget thinner and your savings account bigger!](#) Happy savings!

Carlie Kercheval is a happily married work-at-home homeschooling mom. She and her college sweetheart have been blessed with 3 precious children to raise while traveling the world as a military family. Carlie is the founder of [Today's Frugal Mom™](#) and [Managing Your Blessings](#). She and her husband co-author the [Learning to Speak Life™](#) family Bible Studies and co-host the [Learning to Speak Life™ Radio Show](#). When she is not busy enjoying her family and the great outdoors, you can typically find her cozied up somewhere under a blanket with a good book. You can connect with her on [Facebook](#), [Pinterest](#), and [Twitter](#).

Free & Frugal Ways to Learn Art in Your Homeschool

Learning art in your homeschool seems to fall in the same category as [learning photography](#)...intimidating. A lot of homeschool parents don't feel very creative, thankfully this thing we call the world wide web is here to help again. There is a plethora of free tutorials out there. I have curated a list here of some great resources. You can also check out my [Art Tutorials Pinterest board](#) for even more links.

Art Basics & Elements

[Ideas for Teaching Art at Home](#) – A good article to get you started in coming up with ways to implement art into your homeschool. There are also a few ideas on how to include art in other subjects like history, geography, and English.

[Art Styles](#) – This article teaches you what an art style is and gives a few examples to help you understand.

[Art Mediums](#) – Not sure which medium to start with? This might help, there are also links for each medium to give you more in depth information.

[Composition](#) – Learn the rules of art composition, what it is, and how it can improve your art.

[Perspective](#) – Perspective draws your eye in artwork. Learn the basics of it in this article.

[Color Theory](#) – Two free tutorials on color theory.

[Teaching the Color Wheel](#) – Mixing colors, primary, secondary...yep, you can learn it.

Drawing Tutorials

[How to Draw](#) – This site has a large selection of PDF and video drawing tutorials available for FREE. Tutorials include baby chick, snake, ladybug, manta ray, dog, penguin, scorpion, baby Jesus, a monster, and many more. There is also a selection of Intermediate level drawing tutorials. If you sign up for their blog's email updates, there is also a free ebook called "How to Draw 10 Monsters".

[Free Drawing Tutorials](#) – A collection of tutorials from Masterpiece Art Instruction. Tutorials include shape, shadows and shading, drawing grids, drawing a windmill, and a quick sketch of birds.

[How to Stretch Your Drawing Muscles](#) – A creative exercise to build your creative muscles.

[Learn to Draw Whatever You Want](#) – A good foundation to help make drawing easier. He teaches you how to see the basic shapes in anything and what to do with them when you do see them.

[How to Draw Animals](#) – A collection of drawing tutorials that include horses, bear, butterfly, kangaroo, flamingo, and dolphin.

[Color Pencil Drawing Tutorial](#) – This is a little more advanced.

[How to Draw Young Children](#) – A tutorial for charcoal and graphite.

Painting Tutorials

[How to Paint](#) – This is the same site with the drawing tutorials. Tutorials include mixing paint, finger painting, and watercolor.

[A Complete Guide to Starting Painting](#) – A round-up of this blog's posts that walks you through color theory, oil vs. acrylic, brushes, color mixing, and how drawing

[Exploding Art](#) – This looks like so much fun! Makes for a great outdoors art project.

Marble Painting

[Acrylic Painting tutorials](#) – Hodgepodge has a collection of tutorials using acrylic paints. Tutorials include a cupcake and a Dr. Seuss inspired piece.

Art with Canvas & Painter's Tape

[How to Paint with Acrylic Paint videos](#) – Many free videos available for acrylic painting.

[Oil Painting](#) – If oil painting is something you are interested in, check out this guide.

[The Rule of Thirds in Landscape Painting](#)

[Which Art Canvas Should I Use?](#)

[Oil and Acrylic Paper Isn't Just for Practice](#) – An overview of using paper instead of canvas.

[Watercolor Painting Techniques](#) – A good resource for an easier (to most) medium. The cost for this medium is relatively minimal.

Pastel Tutorials

[Intro to Pastels for Kids: About Pastels](#)

[Intro to Pastels For Kids: How to Blend With Oil Pastels](#)

[Oil Pastel Art Project: Monarch Butterfly](#)

[Hodgepodge](#) has a huge selection of chalk pastel tutorials. The post includes information on where to get supplies, what you need, and other helpful tips.

[Starting to Use Soft and Hard Pastels and Pastel Pencils](#) – A pretty thorough overview of each.

[Pastel Accessories for Pastel Drawing and Charcoal](#)

Other Mediums {Sculpture, 3D Art, Paper Crafting, Mixed Media, Print Making}

[Sculpting for Kids](#) – Tutorials include a coil pot, slab pot, pinch pot, and a comparison of modeling clay to Play Dough.

[Narnia and the North!](#) – This post is a free tutorial and pattern for creating a cardboard ship.

[How to Make Tissue Paper Flowers](#) – Create a bright bouquet that will never wilt.

[Bleeding Tissue Paper Hearts](#)

[Heart Collage: Mixed Media Acrylic](#)

[Art Project: Paper Silhouettes](#)

[Toilet paper prints](#) – A great way to recycle empty toilet paper or paper towel rolls.

[Paper Roll Heart Stamp](#) – Another way to use those empty rolls.

[DIY Cardboard Stamp](#) – Create custom shapes.

[Simple Valentine's Stamp](#) – A creative way to re-purpose a felt Christmas ornament. Post also includes more links for DIY stamps.

Related Tutorials & Other Resources

[DIY Craft Light Box](#) – This can be used for tracing practice.

[See the Light blog](#) – See the Light offers a great art curriculum for sale, but they do have a selection of free lessons.

You can also find [20 Do-It-Yourself Homemade Art Supplies](#) here.

Vicki Arnold is a happy wife to one, busy homeschooling mama to four, and blogger. You can find her blogging at [the Vicki Arnold blog](#) – where P31 & Titus 2 meet Colossians 3:23. She likes to talk about gardening, homeschooling, and homemaking. If she's not there, you can probably find her on [Pinterest](#).

Preschool for Free at Home

Keeping your kids home for the preschool years can be exciting, fun, and expensive. But it doesn't have to be! In fact, you can easily preschool at home for free! Let's look at how you can make the most of this important and precious stage in the life of your child--your very own preschooler.

1. Read, read, read!

I firmly believe that even if you do nothing else, reading to your child as much as possible will give them an incredible head start. Read books and magazines that interest them and read to them as often as you can stand it! The general advice is at least 20 minutes a day. Books can get expensive though. Make sure to use your local library!! It's free, they have a great selection of books, and you can explore many more titles than if you had to buy them all.

Another great place for free books: <http://www.wegivebooks.org/>

Their selection seems to change from time to time, but there is always a great book available to read.

2. Practice Math

You don't need anything fancy to practice math with a preschooler. Just use the toys they already have. Count how many trains they have, sort stuffed animals by size or color, and compare them by size, length, etc.

3. Science

Science at the preschool level a lot of fun! Teach them about their body by singing songs like Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes. Go on walks outside and observe nature. Answer all the questions they ask, and Google the answer if you don't know! YouTube.com can be your best friend here.

4. Gross Motor Skills

Gross motor skills are very important for preschoolers! Fortunately, going to a park or playground can cover most gross motor skills. Climbing stairs and ladders, running, swinging, jumping, etc. Find a line or curb and practice walking and balancing on it. Play catch and learn to kick – if you don't have a ball use a rolled up sock!

5. Art

Let them explore different artistic tools – crayons, markers, paint, construction paper, newspaper, etc! These items are hard to get for free, but there are definitely easy ways to cut down on the cost of art supplies!

Stock up at back-to-school time. Crayons often go for 25 cents for a box of 24!

Use coupons at craft stores. Micheals, JoAnns, AC Moore, and Hobby Lobby often have coupons for 40-50% off and they have great selections of crayons, markers, paints, etc! They also have deals randomly throughout the year, so keep an eye on their flyers!

6. Calendar Time

Calendar time can be a great way to practice math, days of the week, months of the year, and many other concepts!

Free Preschool Resources

Luckily, there are many many people out there who have put together free curricula, printables, and all kinds of materials. This is not a comprehensive list, by any means, so keep checking back at FreeHomeschoolDeals.com to be alerted to any new materials!

- [Royal Baloo Preschool Printables](#)
- [3 Dinosaurs Preschool Printables](#)
- [This Reading Mama Preschool Printables](#)
- [Homeschool Creations Preschool Printables](#)
- [1+1+1=1 Preschool Printables](#)

Free Preschool Curriculum

[Easy Peasy All in One Homeschool](#)

[Brightly Beaming Resources](#)

[Hubbards Cupboard](#)

Free Online Games

[Cookie.com](#)

[Starfall.com](#)

Erin is a homeschooling mom to 3 wild boys. In her “spare” time she enjoys blogging about their homeschooling adventures, knitting, and creating free printables to share. You can find her at Royal-Baloo.com, or on [Facebook](#), [Pinterest](#), or [Google +](#)

Homeschooling for Free and Frugal on the Homestead

We use a math curriculum and a language curriculum. Everything else my boys learn from living their lives on the homestead. But I don't believe they even need the math and language curriculum—it just keeps me on track. How do my kids learn by living? Let's look at a few areas of their lives that provide the perfect academic setting.

The Hen House

If I have six chickens that each lay one egg per day, how many days would it take me to get one dozen? Two dozen? That is math. Want some more? How about if Johnny sells his eggs for \$3 per dozen. How many weeks will it take him to save \$50 if he sells three dozen per week? These are the kinds of questions I ask my boys, or the kinds of things they have to work out for themselves. Currently, my son has 15 chicks that he hatched out in his incubator. He's selling them for \$2.50 each. You bet he wants to be able to figure out how much money he's going to make.

What about science? Learning why good eggs sink and bad eggs float is a science lesson in itself. And looking at chicken feathers under a microscope is fascinating. The older child can study different chicken diseases or try his hand at breeding chickens or developing his own breed of bird. Genetics, anyone?

The Garden

Want to incorporate more nature studies in your homeschool? No need for expensive supplies. A sketch book and some pencils are all you need. And of course, the great outdoors. Have your child start a gardening journal with a page devoted to each vegetable you grow, or each weed that comes up on its own. Have him look up the botanical names and write them next to his sketch. If your

child doesn't feel comfortable with sketching, have him take photographs to paste into the journal. A project like this counts as science *and* art.

The Bee Hive

My 12 year old learned more science going to beekeeping classes with me than he ever would have from a text book that I had to force him to read. But science isn't the only subject you will find in the bee yard.

A bee will travel up to two miles from its hive. If you place a red X on a map where your house is located and then, using the map's scale and a compass, draw a circle with a two mile radius around your house you can see where your bees will travel. After marking your map, travel the roads within the circle to spy out possible pollen/nectar sources for your bees. See if any farms or orchards are located within your circle. This, folks, is geography.

In the "Little House" book *In the Land of the Big Red Apple*, Roger Lea McBride thoroughly describes how to 'course a bee.' What a study in literature.

And let's not forget home economics. Baking with honey, making honeycomb candles, and all the other myriad uses for bee products and the sale of them provide excellent academic fodder for your kids.

I could go on with lessons from the pig pen, the dairy barn, the woodlot, and many other areas of the family farm. But that will have to wait for another post. How have you used lessons from life in your homeschooling? I'd love to hear about them in the comments.

Carol J. Alexander's site, Lessons from the Homestead, is a multifaceted service offering encouragement, learning ideas and projects, profiles of families that successfully homeschool on the homestead, and more. The highlight of this is a series of e-books that each contains 50+ lessons to supplement your curriculum. Currently you can get the two-book [Gardening Set](#) for the price of one by using the discount code 'spring.' Visit LessonsFromTheHomestead.com to learn more.

50 Free Bible Based Learning Resources

This year we followed God's leading and decided to use the [Bible as our main text in our homeschool](#). I felt a strong desire to dig into the Word as a family and let [God be our Teacher](#). I realized if we were seeking Him first, then the most important lessons were being learned. Everything we studied, for the most part, came from our Bible studies. For instance during our [Creation studies](#) we learned about animals, plants, classification, and more. We learned about evolution vs. creation and writing assignments also were based on these topics. When we learned about Noah and the Flood we corresponded much of the geography to our studies. We also learned so much about fossils and geology at that time. Near the [end of Genesis](#) and into Exodus we found ourselves immersed in Ancient Egypt. We no longer separated subjects daily into history, geography, science, etc. but they all just naturally came about from studying the Bible. We did use many other supplements and a separate [math](#) curriculum, but overall the Bible was our spine.

During this time my husband also [lost his job](#). We quickly needed to evaluate our budget and we were able to learn so much using the vast array of free resources available to homeschoolers. Since our number one resource was the Bible, we supplemented mainly with the library and the internet. 😊 It has been an amazing year of learning for our family- God has provided abundantly more than we ever could have imagined. All of the resources we have needed have been a blessing and using the Bible as our main text also was a true gift from God. At a time in our lives when we were struggling with job loss and with fear, God knew we would need to be in His Word more than ever before. Isn't He amazing to provide that for us?

If you are looking for free or budget friendly resources there are so many out there. What a blessing! Here is a list of many from around the web:

50 Free Bible Based Learning Resources

[Free One Year Curriculum- Teaching With God's Heart for the World](#)

[Calvary Curriculum- Free Resources](#)

[Free Creation Resources](#)

[Free Bible Based Gardening Resources](#)

[Bible printables/copywork.worksheets](#)

[Notebooking- Genesis](#)

[Bible Notebooking Pages](#)

[Tower of Babel Activities](#)

[SpellingCity](#) (I choose all the spelling words for my children directly from the Bible passage we are studying each week and then enter them into lists on SpellingCity.)

[Answers In Genesis](#)

[Answers In Genesis- Kids](#)

[Noah's Ark printables](#)

[Kid's Bible Worksheets](#)

[Creation Coloring Pages](#)

[Bible Class Books](#)

[An Old Fashioned Education-Bible](#)

[Heart of Wisdom](#)

[A Kid's Heart- Bible Resources](#)

[Ancient Hebrew-free ebook](#)

[Bible Study tools](#)

[Bible Gateway](#)

[Bible study for kids](#)

[Garden of Praise-free educational materials](#)

[The Holy Bible, English Standard Version \(with Cross-References\)](#)

[Preschool Printables](#)

[Bible Story Printables](#)

[Bible Coloring Pages](#)

[Heart of Wisdom Printable Bible verses for copywork](#)

[50 Word Search for Bible Printables](#)

[Free Bible Lapbooks](#)

[Free Scripture Printables](#)

[Free Scripture Memorization Record](#)

[Free Scripture Verse Memory Cards \(Simply Charlotte Mason\)](#)

[Illustrate a Verse Printables](#) (Homeschool Creations)

[My ABC Bible Verse](#)

[Old Testament Coloring Pages](#)

[Bible Printables](#)

[A Biblical Genealogy](#)

[Sermon Listening Sheets](#)

[Bible People Printable](#)

[Free Online Bible Games](#)

[Free Bible Apps](#)

[3 FREE Missionary Audio Drama Downloads](#)

[Free Bible Copywork About Healthy Living](#)

[Free Prayer Journal Notebook Pages](#)

[Free Ten Commandments Printables and Copywork](#)

[Free Printable Scripture Cards to Combat Worry and Fear](#)

[Free Armor of God Copywork \(KJV\)](#)

[Free Adventures in the Holy Bible from Your Story Hour](#)

[Free Armor of God Printable Pack](#)

[Free Ten Commandments Cursive Copywork KJV](#)

[Free Names of Jesus Printable Memory Cards](#)

[Bible Road Trip](#) is a free 3 year Bible survey for children grades 1-12, written at 4 different levels. There are also free notebook pages for the lower 3 levels.

[Netflix](#) We use this for documentaries and it is a GREAT resource)

And don't forget to keep your homeschool covered in prayer by praying over your homeschool each day. Here is a free printable for doing just that: [31 Days of Praying for Your Homeschool](#)

Karen DeBeus is a homeschooling mom learning to live more simply and keep God at the center of it all. She loves writing about simplifying and sharing with others how her family uses the Bible as the main textbook in their homeschool. She is the author of two best selling eBooks, [Simply Homeschool: Having Less Clutter and More Joy in Your Homeschool](#), and [Called Home: Finding Joy in Letting God Lead Your Homeschool](#). Visit her over at [Simply Living for Him](#) and [Bible Based Homeschooling {on a budget.}](#)

Elementary Homeschooling for Free

Did you know that homeschooling is quickly becoming the fastest growing schooling option in the U.S.? When I began thinking about Homeschooling our oldest I jumped into the deep end – feet first and quickly found myself drowning. **I wasn't even able to tread water with all the overwhelming resources, curriculum choices and different avenues to take.** I was completely L-O-S-T!! The first year we did a book for phonics, *A Beka* readers, all the free printables I could find and some generic Kindergarten books to keep us on track. But as we neared the end of the year, I still had no idea what I was doing.

It wasn't until about mid-March that I finally got a real grasp on what I wanted out of our homeschooling experience. It was then that I found Jamerrill at [Holy Spirit-Led Homeschooling](#) and Amy Roberts at [Raising Arrows](#) who frequently blogged about their homeschooling experiences that I was finally able to wrap my head around what I wanted and what I felt God was leading me to do in our homeschooling.

While you're at it, don't forget to sign up for the **free eBook** [Homeschooling for Free and Frugal: Saving Money for the Homeschool Life!](#)

So, whether you find yourself in the same situation or you just have a strict homeschooling budget to stick to it's not impossible to homeschool on the cheap! **But where do you start?** With the rise of homeschooling, there are a TON of resources available to you for FREE and FRUGAL. There are so many websites that offer freebies, unit studies and printables galore. So let's start with some of my favorites!!!

Bible Resources

Since we teach Bible to our kids at home, I am always on the lookout for Bible printables. Whether it be coloring sheets for the Littles or worksheets for my oldest – I am determined to find some great printables! Here are a few places to find your own:

[Sunday School Printables](#) has coloring sheets, stickers, Christian Certificates, bookmarks, verse cards and more!

[Bible Printables](#) has a great (and very organized) selection of coloring sheets, Bible stories, prayers and Christian song lyrics.

[DLTK](#) has quite a few Bible activities – coloring pages, crafts, poems/songs, lesson plans, puzzles/games, recipes and MORE!

This list on [Squidoo](#) has some great Bible resources!!! (It's seriously amazing!)

[Mad about Jesus](#) has great Scientific Object Lessons to teach Biblical Truths – we love this site!!!!

Don't forget all of the [free Bible resources](#) on FHD.

Blogs with great FREEBIES

[In All You Do](#) ~ I create all-inclusive Unit Studies and other printables for Elementary aged kids.

[Homeschool Creations](#)

[123 Homeschool 4 Me](#)

[Classroom Freebies](#) and [Classroom Freebies Too](#) have multiple freebies daily. I love looking through everything their contributors submit!!

[Enchanted Homeschooling Mom](#) ~ She makes freebies available often, but to get the best deal, sign up for her \$15 LIFETIME Membership and you'll have access to ALL of her amazing creations!!!

Free Coloring Pages

My Favorite Coloring Page Sites

[Coloring Page Source](#) has great coloring pages sorted by category

[Twisty Noodle](#) has hundreds of coloring pages sorted by theme/category

[Educational Coloring Pages](#) has over 1,000 coloring pages sorted by category, theme and alphabetical.

How to Make Educational Printables

Make-Your-Own Printables

If you can't find what you're looking for in already-made {FREE} printables, have no fear, there are a number of websites where you can make-your-own!! Here are some of my favorites:

www.toolsforeducators.com Use these free worksheets to print, game makers, and programs for teachers to make and print teaching resources with pictures or classroom materials for kids. They are simple, but beautiful, versatile and powerful. Tools for Educators includes Puzzle makers of all kinds (word search, crossword, mazes), games (dominoes, bingo, dice), Spelling Worksheet Maker & Reading Sheet Wizard, Free Writing, Spelling and Tracing Worksheet Maker, Certificate Templates, Word Bank Worksheet Creator, Spaghetti String Worksheet generator, Handout Creator and Listening Test Worksheet Makers.

www.stickersandcharts.com is a great place to find printable stickers, behavior charts, chore charts and classroom management ideas for kids.

[Handwriting Worksheets](#) is a great place to make-your-own handwriting sheets and copywork where you can choose your style of writing.

At [Fun Fonix](#) you can create a 100% customizable phonics (choose from hundreds of images) worksheets for K-2. You can also find workbooks and online games to help reinforce the phonics they learn.

[TLS Books](#) has some great resources available on their site. They have them nicely organized by grade or subject, which makes them easy to find.

Here's a post on [How to Make Homeschool Printables](#)

Of course [Free Homeschool Deals](#) has a HUGE collection of [free homeschool worksheets and printables!](#)

Free Homeschool Planners and Record Keeping

In order to have a successful year of homeschooling, you'll need a great planner!!! Here are a few I like.

[Living Well Spending Less](#) has a wonderful Homeschool Planner

[Donna Young Homeschool Planner Sets](#) has several different options

[Free 2013 Homeschool Planner](#)

Whatever you choose to use, don't be afraid to keep your options open. Change it up when you hit a plateau or it's just not working. I've changed and/or added to our curriculum throughout the year as I see subjects we need to work more on or need to tweak and change directions.

Want more ideas? Check out my [Frugal Elementary Homeschooling Tips and Ideas!](#)

Happy Schooling!

Annette has been married to her husband and best friend for almost 10 years. They are raising their four children to follow the Lord's will, no matter what. Annette longs for the day when she will meet her 5 children who have entered heaven before her. She blogs about homeschooling, Biblical parenting, grain-free recipes and maintaining her sanity over at [In All You Do](#). You can keep up with her on [Facebook](#), [Google+](#), [Pinterest](#) and [Twitter](#).

Six Nearly Free Ways to Learn a Second Language

Learning a second language can open your eyes and heart to innumerable opportunities for growth. In spite of it being a high school requirement, I would recommend it to anyone! And if you can learn more than one language, great! You've just significantly multiplied your potential for life changing experiences and outreach opportunities!

When I was in high school I became very interested in learning Spanish. I fell in love with [Mexico](#) and my goal was to live, work and minister there in the future. God has more than fulfilled that dream as my husband and are now [doing what we love](#), in a country that we love, speaking the language that we love.

Here are the things I did (most of them free) to become fluent in my second language. These could apply to any language.

Take a Class – find a class at a local high school, community college, church, online, self-study, whatever you can find available in the desired second language. Some may have fees, but some will also be offered free. Take advantage of whatever formal training is available to you.

Teach English – If you volunteer to, or get paid to teach English to speakers of other languages you will by default learn bits and pieces of their language. Ask about opportunities to get involved with these programs at your local public elementary and high schools, community colleges and churches.

Make Conversation – If you know a native speaker of your desired language or if you know someone else who is also trying to learn that language, arrange a time to meet for conversation, where you strictly speak to each other in the desired language. This may be halting and feel unnatural at first, but as your vocabulary and confidence increases, this will be one of your best free language learning

tools! You may also consider joining a sports team or other group that is made up largely of people who speak the desired language. I asked to be matched with a Spanish speaking roommate one semester in college and the language benefits of our casual conversation during the few hours a day we were both in the room together were huge!

Attend Church – Find a church hosting services in the desired language and attend regularly. Take notes to follow the speaker, write down the main points and the unknown words and phrases that you hear. Look up the unknown later in a dictionary, or ask a native speaker to explain it to you. I did this for several semesters and my grasp of the language increased dramatically!

Listen – Fluency in a language will not come until the ear has been trained to distinguish and interpret the unique sounds of the language. Regular listening to sermons, radio, audio books, movies, music etc. in the desired language will help you grasp the language sooner than if you had not done this.

Read – Often the eye can interpret the second language sooner than the ear or the tongue. Reading in the desired language is good practice. Look for words that are familiar and try to grasp the message of the text. Look up unfamiliar words in a [dictionary](#) or English version of the book/literature. There are many [Bilingual Books](#) and [Bilingual Bibles](#) printed so you can see both languages side by side. I still enjoy using my Spanish/English Bible because so often the other language adds meaning to the text or gives a fuller description to the passage.

If you are interested in learning Spanish, here are two great places to find free internet based resources:

[20 Free Online Resources for Spanish Language Learners](#)

[15 Places to Learn Spanish for Free](#)

This series is part of [iHomeschool Network Hopscotch 2013](#).

[Katie Hornor](#) is an Educator, Writer, Speaker and Blogger making her home in Tropical Mexico. Her favorite things include peanut butter balls, elephants, and the hammock in her living room. She is a missionary wife, a homeschooling mama of 4, and author of [Loving You Long Distance](#). She blogs for your encouragement at [Paradise Praises](#) and for Spanish Home Educators at [Educando en el Hogar](#).

A Day in the Life of our Free Homeschool

In 2011 I quit my full time job to become a stay at home/homeschool mom. I had planned and prepared though for a year prior. I wanted to be sure we could live on one income and still provide all the necessities for our family without making any HUGE sacrifices or ever using another credit card (we are debt free). I had figured that we would need to spend a minimum of \$300-\$400 on curriculum per child each year. I began to worry a little bit. In 2011 we were barely scraping by and I was getting ready to quit my job. What was I thinking? How would we be able to go on any field trips? Let the children participate in extracurricular activities? Buy art/craft supplies? Deal with an increase our grocery budget? These are just some of the questions that popped into my head. But after more research and many internet searches later I realized that we didn't NEED to spend ANY money on curriculum. We could save that money and use it for other things.

So your probably thinking, "really you don't buy any curriculum?" And the answer is yes. **Since we began homeschooling I have not purchased any curriculum.** The money that we would have spent on curriculum goes towards the purchase of used books (purchased from the library, Goodwill or Amazon), fieldtrips, extracurricular's (Lego club and horseback riding), art/craft supplies, groceries, gas, etc.

You too can homeschool for FREE to and here's how...

All you really need is internet access and a library card. Oh and a few planning hours each week! We are a very eclectic, [delight directed](#) homeschool family and do lots of unit studies. The unit study method is fantastic because it allows flexibility, encourages children to follow their interests, works with all ages and learning styles and is FREE. A unit study topic will in most cases cover all subjects,

yes even math can be covered in a unit study. Creating a unit study for your children is as easy as 1,2,3, REALLY!

- 1) Have your children pick their topic(s).
- 2) Find books, DVDs, etc related to the chosen topic at the library.
- 3) Search the internet for FREE resources your children can utilize. Like worksheets, lapbooks, videos, craft projects, science experiments, etc. [Pinterest](#) is a great place to find homeschool resources.

I also suggest contacting local companies, organizations, etc to see if they will perhaps assist you with your unit study topic. 9 times out of 10 when you tell them that your child is studying a topic related to their industry and really excited to learn more, they will gladly offer their assistance. For example when we did our sand unit study I contacted a local sand supplier to see if they would donate some sand samples and they did an entire box. You can also incorporate fieldtrips that are related to your topic as well and yes you can even do these for FREE as well. For example when we did our bird unit study I contacted a local aviary to see if we could come visit and they said yes. And again when we did our sand unit study I contacted a glass making shop to see if we could get a demonstration and they said yes...and even allowed some of our friends to go as well. For Chinese New Year I searched to see if there were any events going on locally and found a Shaolin Institute offering a free family event. For geography related topics you can contact local embassies, travel agencies, etc for great resources.

Remember when doing a **unit study the opportunities are endless**. Don't be afraid to think outside the box. Provide your child with the resources and watch them immerse themselves in their topic. I generally do our unit study planning monthly. So the last weekend of every month I request our books from the library and begin finding and pinning unit study resources. [Pinterest](#) is great for organizing your FREE unit study resources.

Now in all fairness I do need to tell you two more things because though we don't buy curriculum we do own many amazing curriculum's, but they were not bought. One way I have accumulated curriculum is by entering giveaways. I enter about 10 giveaways a week from various resources including blogs, Facebook, Twitter/Facebook parties, websites, etc. Actually the last two years 90% of our children's Christmas presents were won via giveaways. It takes me maybe 1-2 hours total to find and enter giveaways each week.

And the second way we obtain the curriculum we own is by doing blog reviews. We are so very blessed with all the curriculum we receive to review. However for our first year of homeschooling my blog was still new and it wasn't until Fall 2012 that I really started getting review products regularly.

Blogging is something you can get into as well if you choose and guess what it's FREE depending on the blogging platform you use. Blogging has opened many doors for our family and has been a great way to also earn extra money for our family.

I hope this post has given you great information and inspired you.

For more information on homeschooling for **FREE** be sure to visit [Kathys Cluttered Mind](http://KathysClutteredMind.com). Each month myself and a blogger friend share valuable FREE resources on our [FreeBEE Friday](#) posts. I also share [giveaways](#), [product reviews](#), [fieldtrip](#) ideas and [unit study](#) resources. For specific unit study resources/ideas search by topic at the top right corner.

Kathy quit her full time job in July 2011 to stay at home and homeschool her two children. She is also a wife to her wonderful husband whom she married on her 19th birthday in 2000. She lives in Georgia just north of the hustling and bustling city of Atlanta. When she is not homeschooling the kids she enjoys blogging, scrapbooking, hiking, geocaching and watching movies. Kathy is also the social media manager for A+ TutorSoft Homeschool Math. Read more about her homeschool journey on her blog, <http://www.kathysclutteredmind.com>.

How Homeschoolers can Save Money by Waiving SAT/ACT/College Application Fees

When parents make the commitment to homeschool their children, it's not just an educational commitment. There are other ramifications too, **like forgoing a second full-time income**. While many families have found ways for the at-home parent to earn a little part-time money, it's rare to find homeschooling families where both parents work full-time outside the home.

In addition to being single-income families, homeschoolers tend to incur more educational costs as well, since the government does not pick up the tab for our expenses. We pay for our own curriculum, supplies, and teacher manuals, field trips, lesson costs, and testing services. There are certainly ways to cut down on costs, like sharing curriculum, forming co-ops with friends, etc., but there's a definite cost that comes with the choice to homeschool.

As children get into high school, and start to think about college, these costs continue. **It doesn't get cheaper as kids get older**. For some families, finances are a huge issue, even while they are committed to homeschooling through high school. I know parents who have come up with all sorts of creative ways to supply their children's needs, because they are committed to teaching their children at home. If you're committed to homeschooling, as your children get older it's especially important to plan ahead, because there are things you can do in high school to save thousands of dollars on college costs!

SAT/ACT Expenses and Waivers

If your high school student is headed to college, the SAT or ACT will be required for admission. In order to get good scholarships, students need to score well, which sometimes means spending money on test prep. Sometimes local libraries offer practice tests for the SAT/ACT, which is great experience and generally free, so check with your library to see if they offer this. If you'd like to learn more about the SAT and the ACT, and how your student can improve their scores, I offer a [free webinar](#) called Taking the Mystery Out of the SAT/ACT. Co-hosted with Andrew Pudewa from the Institute for Excellence in Writing, it's a great (free!) way to help you prepare.

Homeschoolers can save money on the SAT or ACT by requesting fee waivers. For both tests, homeschoolers must provide proof of eligibility to your local high school. These waivers can't be completed by the SAT or ACT company; they must be provided by a high school, but it never hurts to ask. They will usually only waive the fee for the test one time. There are waivers available for both the [SAT](#) and the [ACT](#).

Application Fees and Waivers

In addition to testing expenses, most colleges charge a fee when a student submits an application, which typically ranges from \$50-100. Many colleges will waive the application fee if you ask them to. Many colleges will waive the application fee if you visit their school and request an application. Ask them! Other colleges are so eager for qualified students that they will ask you to apply to their college at no cost. For that reason, getting great SAT or ACT test scores can allow you to apply to more colleges for less money.

NACAC Request for Application Fee Waiver

If you can't get a fee waiver, you can try requesting one through the National Association for [College Admission Counseling](#) (NACAC) website. Read the rules and make sure you are eligible. You will have to provide financial information if you want a fee waiver, but it's doable! And it can save you money!

High School Help

Don't doubt it for a second – you CAN homeschool high school! You don't have to be afraid – you won't ruin your child's future or jeopardize their college chances! You can provide a superior high school education for your kids that will open doors for them. Don't waste money on accrediting agencies or diploma-granting companies. Your homeschool grades, credits, and transcripts are official, and colleges all over the country accept them. For more free information, visit my [website](#), including my [freebies](#), where you'll learn everything you need to know about homeschooling high school and getting college admission and scholarships—without spending tons of money!

Lee Binz, The HomeScholar helps parents [homeschool high school](#) and is a leading internet home school resource helping parents homeschool to college. She is an expert in how to craft a winning [homeschool transcripts](#). She has an award-winning Christian homeschool blog and one of the most popular homeschool newsletters available. Lee is a dynamic homeschool speaker at homeschooling conventions as well as homeschooling support groups. Check out her homeschool online free mini-course and training webinar on how to give homeschool credit in high school. You can find Lee online at www.TheHomeScholar.com and on [Facebook.com/TheHomeScholar](https://www.facebook.com/TheHomeScholar).

Affording to Homeschool a Special Needs Child

I've been homeschooling my child with autism since I yanked him out of school at the end of his second grade year. I say yanked but it was really my husband and I decided the older he got the more he needed an education that was really tailored to his strengths and weaknesses. One day, I just didn't take him to school anymore. We filed our intent to homeschool and went on our way.

When we first took him out we were dirt poor. **There was no extra money for books and all that other jazz.** Between [RDI therapy](#), speech, occupational, [special diet and supplements](#) and a toddler in the house, money was stretched thin. Really, it was non-existent.

At that point we had a fantastic therapist who gave us some sound advice:

Don't try to emulate school at home.

- Take a break and let him deschool.
- Spend time together.
- Read books.
- Play games.
- Join him in his world.
- Take time to build a trust relationship with him and lessons will go so much better in the end.

That year we also let him play a lot with his toddler sister.

Children with autism often have a different developmental age than their chronological age.

For example, they may celebrate their 8th birthday but really be more like a 4 year old inside. The best advice I can give for homeschooling a special needs child is to take some time really determining where they are academically and socially. Then make an unofficial list of things to work on for the school year. Some years it will be academics. **Other years it will be social and life skills that need addressed.** It's better to stop academics for a season to address developmental gaps that prepare the way for higher order thinking and lessons.

In my opinion you never need to buy a boxed curriculum for your special needs child. You will end up not using portions of it making it too expensive in the long run. Children with special needs often have varying degrees of competence in subjects. My son can read and comprehend at a college level in ninth grade but is doing the same writing program as his fifth grade sister. Another great benefit of knowing his strengths and weaknesses is that I can get different levels of curricula to fit his needs. Since he loves to read we use the free curriculum [Ambleside Online](http://AmblesideOnline.com). It has all the lesson planned out. All you really need to add is math and science. Most of the books can be found at the library freeing up valuable money.

For social time or hands on learning don't be afraid to take advantage of free activities. Story time at the library is fantastic even if your child is chronologically older. Playing at the park or an indoor playground is a great way to practice social skills among other things. The best part of this is that if your child is ready to go then you can leave since it was free. Or if your child melts down you can elect not to go back. It takes some of the pressure off of everyone.

No matter your child's special needs remember the tortoise always wins by going slow. It will all get accomplished by moving forward slow and steady!

Resources for special needs homeschooling:

[Special Needs Homeschooling](#): Resources for homeschooling children with ADHD, autism, learning disorders, and for parents with special needs as well.

[Homeschooling Autistic Kids](#)

[7 Tips for Beginning to Homeschool a Child With an Autism Spectrum Disorder](#)

[Dyslexia and Homeschooling](#)

[The Ultimate List of Dyslexia Resources](#)

[Homeschooling With Dyslexia](#): A 10-Day Series

Reasons to [Homeschool an ADHD Child](#)

[Interview on HSLDA Homeschooling and ADHD](#)

[School ADD Isn't Homeschool ADD](#) (Note from Jamerrill – one of my favorite articles – ever.)

Resources on **Homeschooling with Autism** from Meet Penny:

[The Ultimate Guide to Autism Home Therapy](#)

[Ten Reasons My Child with Autism Loves Homeschool](#)

[Homeschooling Our Child with Autism \(PDD-NOS\)](#)

[How We Taught Our Child with Autism to Write](#)

[How We Taught Our Child with Autism to Speak](#)

Penny is a sweet tea drinking, Jesus loving, transplanted New Hampshire girl living in the South with her Cracker children and husband. They have some pretty crazy adventures living and homeschooling at [Our Crazy Adventures in Autismland](#). Sharing them keeps her sane!

Teaching Home Economics for Free

I still remember my one and only home economics class. I was in 8th grade when I took it and I distinctly remember 3 things about the class: (1) doing a needlepoint pattern – at least I think it was needlepoint, it might be called something else (see how much I learned?) (2) toasting marshmallows in the oven and (3) hanging out with 3 of my good friends who were in the class too – most of the time hanging out in the kitchen talking and toasting marshmallows in the oven.

And that pretty much sums up my before-marriage home economics learning.

When I got married almost 13 years ago I started completely from scratch. I knew next to nothing about cleaning, cooking, organizing, sewing, or money-management. Raising kids? Nope, I was an only child who wasn't really interested in babysitting as a teen.

So when [my husband and I](#) started planning out what we wanted our kids to learn by the time they graduated high school, home economics played a big role in that list (yes, for both our girls AND our boys).

Thankfully, with all of the resources online, I don't have to worry about trying to make sure that I know everything before my kids learn it. We have made home economics a priority in our homeschool day and hope that our children will go into adulthood with the resources not only to manage a business well but to manage a household well too!

Below is a list of online resources that I've found very helpful on the road to teaching home economics to children.

Money Management

We want our kids to have a good understanding of where money comes from, how it works, how YOU work to get the money, and how you use the money that you know you will be receiving each month to set a budget.

You can do this through regular life lessons, or by sitting down and [researching questions together about what it means to make money and to have a job](#).

Or you can follow some of the money-management lessons that are free online!

[Financial Literacy For Everyone](#) has lesson plans, quizzes, and tests for all ages covering money, budgeting, and bill paying!

[Center for Economic Education](#) has many free lesson plans that go along with books that you can get from your local library.

[Hand-On Banking](#) has lesson plans for all ages, including adults! This one even has fun interactive games.

Cooking Skills

The first part of cooking skills that should be covered before anything else is food safety. The US Department of Health & Human Services has put out a [food safety course](#) that's free for anyone to use.

[Kids Cooking Activities](#) has a ton of lesson plans for kids from toddler-age up through 18 years old. The lesson plans are pretty comprehensive and cover everything from pouring (for the younger ones) to planning and making meal plans to preserving food!

[Dress Up 121](#) has several fun online games where you make different recipes virtually. Let's take sushi for example – you have to mix up the ingredients, cut the veggies, steam the rice, roll up the sushi rolls, and put it into a nice visual presentation! I could see this being a blast for younger children who are not ready to do things on their own in the kitchen, but would love have some mouse-on experience.

The [Activity TV cooking section](#) called “Let's Eat” has lots of fun videos with short lessons on how to make different food items. They have everything from breakfast to dinner to dessert!

Sewing

Sewing isn't something that I've ever been very interested in, but I think at least a few basic sewing skills are necessary for everyone to have.

Thankfully, there are many places online where you can learn right along with your kids!

[Kids Sewing Projects](#) has a ton of great lessons online! It begins with age-appropriate projects that focus on fine motor skills and getting kids interested in the mechanics of hand-sewing. This one goes all the way from preschool up through an intermediate level.

[Craft & Fabric Links](#) provides sewing lessons for you and your child(ren) to learn together! It starts with learning basic tools, how to choose fabrics, and how to read patterns. The website also offers several free patterns and other crafty ideas.

[Sewing.org](#) has printable sewing information for learning the basic tools of sewing and working up to serious projects. You can print these .pdf files and use them to accompany any video or audio tutorial as a reference.

Cleaning & Organizing

I know I'm guilty of just giving the kids a chore chart and making sure they check off what they need to do each day without really giving them the tools that they need to develop what I never did: organizational skills. I know that it comes naturally to some, but if you have a kid that's like me then they need some very practical skills and tools to use to keep things clean and organized.

Starting around Jr. High I plan on taking my kids through the [Fly Lady lessons](#). Most of them are available online, and there are many YouTube videos to go along with the lessons. The Fly Lady has helped millions of people around the world learn how to structure their cleaning schedule!

The [free & cheap ebook lists](#) on Free Homeschool Deals are very helpful in finding out when a new cleaning or simple-living eBook is available for free. I read through a simple-living eBook earlier this year with my 10 year old and we both learned a ton through it! You can find free ebooks for decluttering and simple-living in the [Home Design](#) and [Interior Design](#) sections on Amazon.

Check out the completely FREE eBook from Dana White of A Slob Comes Clean specifically on [Teaching Your Kids To Clean!](#) In it she has lesson plans, supply lists, age-appropriate task lists, and printable to help to teach your kids the necessary cleaning skills.

There are many more great resources for [teaching home economics](#) too! With an internet connection, a library card, and a little bit of creativity, we can teach our kids all kinds of fun skills – whether we know how to do them or not!

Rachel Holland is a homeschool mom of four, a wife to one incredible husband, a blogger, and a speaker who has a passion for helping others save money! She is dedicated to helping you be able to bring more of your hard-earned money home and has set up two websites to help with that: [Surviving The Stores](#) and [How To Homeschool For Free](#). You can subscribe to Rachel on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Pinterest](#).

How to Cope Financially While Homeschooling

As homeschoolers we're already doing things different from many families. Creative thinking and ingenuity go along with the territory. But as you take the homeschool plunge you may wonder how homeschooling families make it all work. Several of the questions that I've received deal with this underlying theme:

Some young mothers want to know if it's possible to work and homeschool. It takes a ton of determination, but it is possible. **You have to begin where you are, and make the most out of your situation.** I know mothers who currently work outside the home and homeschool successfully.

Would many of them like to be home full-time?

Absolutely.

Are they giving up on their homeschool vision because they are in a season of working?

Nope.

They're pressing on and keeping the faith. **I worked full-time and homeschooled for 3-years.** There are increasingly many inspiring single moms who both work and homeschool too.

With God all things are possible...

How we made it work:

As a nurse I had a lot of schedule flexibility. I could pick my own hours, pick up bonus shifts, and work my schedule around my husbands. I usually worked 40-hours within a 3-day period. It was not ideal, but we made it work.

My mom lived a few miles away. She could fill in the child care gap if we had a schedule overlaps.

We homeschooled year round (still do). This gave us lots of schedule flexibility.

I want to say to the moms who are working and want to homeschool, please prayerfully consider homeschooling. **It is worth the plate spinning and extra juggling.** If your husband is behind you, or if you're a single mom, God can help you do this.

In my experience it became clear that God had put his finger on my working. I wrote a series about it last summer called [Choosing Home](#). **I knew in my heart that God wanted me to [trust Him and my husband](#) and truly come home.**

We didn't have years to plot and plan the logistics of how I would be able to stay home with the children. Our big planned out formula for me to become a stay-at-home mom was...we just jumped. I felt God say quit, so I did.

Leap...it was a leap of faith!

And God has kept me home.

Our finances are actually more peace-filled now than they were when we had two-incomes. This is because we honored God's leading for our family. We trusted Him to care for us; He has and He will.

We no longer have two-incomes; we also no longer have:

- Child care pressure.
- New vehicle expense.
- Higher car insurance.
- Extra expenses of my uniforms, shoes, lunches/dinners.
- Not enough family time: My husband and I were always two people passing by.
- Out of control grocery spending.
- Additional gas expense.
- Out of control cell phone bills.
- And lots of other headaches that were caused by my working outside of the home.

When I asked on [facebook](#) "**How do you cope financially while homeschooling;**" I received a slew of heartfelt answers. Here are a few of the inspirational thoughts:

“We continue to tithe and to stand on God’s word. A lot of times when it gets hard financially the first thing many will do is hold back the tithe and offering. My husband and I are at the point where in order to make it and have every need met we must tithe a rebuke the lies of the enemy. We just trust and completely walk by faith with our finances and let me say, every month God goes above and beyond what we asked for.

“I babysit fulltime for a single mom. It adds one more child to the mixture but he has easily become a part of our growing family. He is now like a son to my husband and I and a brother to my other children and I get paid for having him with us!”

“I buy a lot of material I know can be passed down to all the kids. I have also been blessed with family who buys for my kids, I would rather them buy homeschool supplies than a bunch of junk. My kids also get special things like learning games etc for Christmas, Birthdays and occasionally when they earn them.”

Additional ways that our family copes financially while homeschooling:

We trust God. And not because we’re super holy. We trust God because he has continuously provided for us. In the big things and little things, he is faithful. This is the journey He has our family on, therefore He is going to provide.

We tithe and we give. **God does the rest.**

My husband handles the finances. **I know that Dave Ramsey suggests both the husband and wife do this together. And while I’m not a financial adviser, and I’m certainly not Dave Ramsey, my experience has been that the Lord created my husband to bear the weight of our financial responsibility. I make phone calls or mail checks if he needs me too, but only under his direction.** He thrives having a clear vision of what is needed for our family.

We reuse and re-purpose as many items as possible. Old tea towels become napkins, empty ice-cream buckets become our storage containers, zip lock bags are rinsed and reused. Here are the [top ten ways I save my large family money](#).

We no longer run from thing-to-thing. **We enjoy our home as the center of our life. We don’t waste gas by seeking entertainment away from home.**

When we do go out we pack as much into our time away as possible. **If we’re going shopping we also throw in a run to the library.**

For homeschool we use our **Bibles, internet, library and a wealth of other materials that we’ve picked up over the years. We snag up items at our homeschool group and thrift stores. At one**

point we really needed a globe for our school room. We prayed about it and within a few days we had a brand new globe. God even cares about the school supplies.

What we do buy for our homeschool are non-consumables; books and learning tools that can be used by more than one child for years to come. We also use [refillable ink cartridges](#) and stacks of cheap printer paper.

We cast our care and do what we can do. **We save and we make plans. We have a vision and goals. But overall our ways are in the hands of the Lord.**

Additional Articles

There is a wealth of up-lifting articles on the web to help you afford the homeschool life. Here a few additional links. Visit them as you have time, and be blessed by the encouragement! You will find a wealth of information available to you in the many great homeschool communities that have formed online.

Don't have a school room? Neither does **Rachel** of **Finding Joy**. Look at the inspiring places her family schools in [Where We Learn](#).

What about [affording the large family homeschool](#)? You can learn lots of tips and tricks from **Amy** of **Raising Arrows**; additionally, she talks about [how to create your own history curriculum](#).

Aadel shares on **NaturalFamilyToday.com** resources that you need to get started homeschooling, in her series [What Do I Need to Start Homeschooling?](#) Aadel also tells [Tricks to Finding the Best Homeschool Resources](#).

Tricia from **HodgePodge** offers [Easy Mac and Beef Casserole Recipe](#), and other cost-saving recipes for [Slow Food for Fast Sundays](#). You can find a lot of other goodies on her site such as [Unit Studies with Multiple Ages](#), and [Free Art Tutorials](#).

FreeHomeschoolDeals.com has daily [Free Amazon Kindle Books](#), [Free Educational Resources](#); and features [Free Printables](#), [Coupons](#) and more! Check the [Current Deals & Free Stuff page](#) for updated daily offers.

My prayer is that you've been blessed in your current, or future, homeschooling journey, through reading Homeschooling for FREE & Frugal. **Please, don't let "the cost" of homeschooling discourage you - ever.** My hope is that you've been greatly inspired by the topics featured in this eBook; that you will go on in faith, confident that the Lord will provide.

About Jamerrill



Jamerrill Stewart is a Christian homeschooling mom of 6 (soon to be 7) and wife to her husband Travis of over 16-years. They enjoy their country days catching frogs at their pond, getting lost in great read alouds, and spinning on the tire swing.

Jamerrill created FreeHomeschoolDeals.com in 2012 to help all families in affording the homeschool life. You'll also find her sharing about Jesus, Motherhood, Homeschooling, and other stuff at JamerrillStewart.com and JamerrillStewart.TV.